



WE'RE BACK! The GEM WISHES READERS AND ADVERTISERS A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR AND ALL GOOD FORTUNE IN 2017

Chilly, but cheerful turn-out for Porthcawl's 52nd Christmas swim!

PHOTOGRAPH by GLYN EVANS



THIS SUNDAY

**8th January 2017
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IN contrast to recent years, the day started off wet and windy, for the Porthcawl Christmas Swim, but as if by magic, at 11.30am the grey turned to blue and the sun shone.

What a turn-out, with 1,023 registered swimmers at the 52nd swim and lots of Christmas spirit and goodwill for the traditional chilly dip in the Bristol Channel.

With the tide a good way out, swimmers had quite a walk or run down the beach to the sea at Sandy Bay. They were supported and cheered

on by approximately 2,000 spectators. At 11.45am, Porthcawl Coastguards signalled the start of the parade and cleared a path through the spectators down the beach for the swimmers. Many were in fancy dress as they walked through the spectators from the Hi-Tide Inn to the sea.

The procession of swimmers of all ages, male and female, was led by Vic Davies, Chris Hughes and members of Penybont Surf Lifesaving Club.

Spectators cheered and gave their enthusiastic support to all those taking part.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

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Kenfig Hill man stole from his ex-girlfriend

A JOBLESS man who stole £1,500 from his ex-girlfriend after breaking into her home, has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment, suspended for 18 months, at Cardiff Crown Court, writes AJ SICLUNA.

Thomas Graham (32) of Meadow Avenue, Kenfig Hill, admitted a charge of burglary and theft and was told by Judge Peter Harris-Jenkins: "This was a mean offence."

He said he had "targeted" his ex-partner and stole money to fund his drug habit. He added: "You knew she was in work at the time and, therefore, there was a degree of planning."

Rebecca Griffiths said that Graham had a relationship with Rachel Forbes that was "on and off" over six years. In June, she decided to end it. She later discovered that her flat had been burgled and her savings - of between £1,500 and £2,000 to buy a car - had been taken.

Two neighbours, said Ms Griffiths, had seen Graham's car parked in the area at the time of the offence. Miss Forbes contacted the defendant and he told her to ".... off."

She later told him she had a new relationship and Graham punched through a kitchen window. He later told her he had stolen the sum of money and was "gutted" because of it.

It was agreed that he would repay £200 a month.

Miss Forbes later said she felt paranoid about someone breaking into her home and also felt

she was betrayed by the defendant, whom she said practiced marital arts and was bipolar.

He was said to have one previous conviction for wounding.

His counsel, Alex Greenwood, said: "This is his first acquisitive offence. He struggles with being bipolar and he is also a heroin addict. At the time of the offence, he was in the throes of that addiction.

He maintains he stole only £420."

Graham was also ordered to carry out 200 hours unpaid work, observe a curfew, be electronically tagged from 6.30pm to 6.30am for two months.

Graham was also directed to pay compensation of £1,000 and a court surcharge of £150.

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As a turbulent 2016 makes way for a new day... A Testament of Hope for peace

FOR many, 2016 will surely rank as one of the most turbulent in modern memory, with natural disasters – earthquakes, hurricanes, fires and floods – all taking a heavy human toll.

But the year was more indelibly marked by never-ending media images of grim global conflicts, brutal acts of terrorism, and poignant scenes of fleeing masses of refugees, all confirming that 18th century Scottish poet Robert Burns' bleak truism – “*man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn*” – sadly, is as true today as it was then.

Violent conflict in Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere dominated the world news headlines; while at home, wide divisions exposed by the EU Referendum and Brexit ‘debate’ led to an unprecedented level of vitriolic abuse and invective, bordering on enmity, between the ‘Leave’ and ‘Remain’ camps, which split the country in two, leaving deep wounds in society that may take a long time to heal. It was exceeded only by the unseemly battle over the US Presidency, which has left the world’s other great democracy split asunder in its wake, even as a new year dawns.

However, the good news is that 2017 now offers a fresh opportunity for men (and women) of peace, both at home and abroad, who truly believe in reconciliation and renewal, to give the biblical message of ‘*peace on earth, goodwill towards men*’ real substance, rather than something scribbled once a year on a greetings card...Always remembering Albert Einstein’s wise adjunct: “*Peace cannot be kept by force, it can only be achieved by understanding*”

World and home leaders – at every level – should heed the inspiring words of another great man, who died for precisely these values. In ‘A Testament of Hope’ before he was assassinated in 1968, Rev Martin Luther King Jnr wrote: “*Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that*”.

In a world riven by discord and strife, let this be not only a simple appeal for peace and harmony, but a challenge

Don John, GEM Editor.

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL LOCAL AUTHORITIES

CHRISTMAS DAY was a working day for carers and support workers. Rather than sitting down to dinner with their family, these community superstars worked to provide support and care to vulnerable people in their own homes and in residential centres.

Maybe they looked after members of your family; they definitely looked after people in your community.

Carers ensure that the most vulnerable in our society are treated with dignity.

They support older people, those who are physically disabled, individuals with mental health issues and service users who have learning difficulties.

They offer consistency of care and provide a range of support.

They deserve not only our praise but fair rates

of pay and conditions of service.

Unfortunately, most are paid the minimum wage of £7.20 per hour. We would like everyone to be paid at least the real Living Wage of £8.45 per hour.

Please support care workers in your community by providing the sector with more money.

Quality care means investing in the workforce.

Chris Bennett, chief executive, Perthyn, Mandy Evans, chief executive, Mirus Wales, Lynne Hackett, head of community sector, UNISON Cymru/Wales, Ewan Hilton, chief Executive, Gofal;

Anne Hinckley, chief executive, Wales and West Housing Association;

Adrian Roper, chief executive, Cartrefi Cymru;

Alun Thomas, chief Executive, Hafal.

CORRECTION

THE Glamorgan GEM runs regular columns across the Vale and Bridgend areas featuring some of our top politicians – unfortunately, in the print edition on Thursday, December 22, we regret there was a mix-up.

The column for Chris Elmore, Labour MP for Ogmore, was inadvertently run under the byline of Councillor Neil Moore, Labour Leader of the Vale Council. This was corrected in The GEM’s digital edition.

Our fulsome apologies to both parties.

Readers’ Letters

Please keep your letters BRIEF and address them to: The Editor, at Glamorgan GEM Ltd, Graig House, 53 Eastgate, Cowbridge CF71 7EL or email gemeditorial@tindlenews.co.uk

- Letters and e-mails MUST include your FULL address and a contact telephone number.

An email address alone is not sufficient!

We reserve the right to edit all letters. We do NOT accept anonymous mail.

Heartwarming response to refugee centre's appeal

THANK you so much to the people in and around Llantwit Major, who responded to an appeal for warm winter clothes.

The Oasis Centre in Splott supports the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers in Cardiff and the Vale, and the clothes were given “to those who needed them, via the ‘Attic Boutique’ to provide good quality clothing, shoes, and

various items to refugees/asylum seekers, who arrive with nothing but the clothes they stand in. Our aim is to treat all with respect and dignity in a boutique-style environment.”

We took four huge car-loads into Cardiff

and were astounded by the high quality of the donations, beautiful coats, good strong shoes and boots, warm jumpers, some brand-new trousers, plus plenty of cosy hats, scarves and gloves.

In the short time I've volunteered there, I've met people whose stories are tragic, including a man who took a year to get here, so it was heartwarming that people brought their spare warm clothing.

Thanks also to Julian the manager of the Co-op, for the loan of a large trolley for collecting the donations.

Annie Paine,

Llantwit Major.

THE PRINCESS OF WALES' STAFF WERE 'MARVELLOUS'

I WANTED to provide some positive feedback to The GEM, following a recent visit to the Princess of Wales Hospital in Bridgend.

I was very happy with the level of care received by the staff on ward 7, and they could not do enough to support my recovery in time for Christmas.

At first, I went to A & E at 1.30pm,

and didn't receive a bed until 9.30pm later that evening. For this, I blame the council and Assembly Government when they closed Maes Gwyn Hospital and sold the ground for houses, why didn't they spend the money on extra wards, knowing that more people were coming into Wales. There are cancellations of operations and no beds, but the staff were marvellous.

Norman Viant

and heartwarming that people brought their spare warm clothing.

Thanks also to Julian the manager of the Co-op, for the loan of a large trolley for collecting the donations.

Annie Paine,

Llantwit Major.

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'Happy New Year' from Age Cymru

a range of issues, including benefits and care at home.

We also marked older people's contribution to society with our annual national celebration Age Positive Week, which again saw groups across the country joining in our celebrations.

I'd like to thank all the companies, organisations, individuals, volunteers, donors and fundraisers who worked with and gave their time and energy to Age Cymru in 2016.

I'd also like to thank Age Cymru's local charity partners whose tireless work in communities across Wales last year helped make a real difference to the lives of thousands of older people.

Finally, I'd like to wish GEM readers a peaceful and prosperous New Year and assure you that Age Cymru will continue with our mission of creating an age friendly Wales where older people can lead happy and fulfilling lives.

Ian Thomas, Chief executive, Age Cymru.

TENOVUS PRAISE FOR VOLUNTEERS

I'd like to take some time to thank all 1,900 volunteers who generously give so much time to Tenovus Cancer Care across Wales.

In the last year, our volunteers have given an incredible 260,000 hours to fundraising, helping in shops, in our warehouse and at events, helping in one of our offices, supporting our health and wellbeing campaigns, advising on research funding, championing our Sing with Us choir, lending a hand to the charity's cancer support advisors – and manning our free support line to help anyone affected by cancer.

We couldn't do what we do without our amazing volunteers. We're really very grateful to them, and we're looking forward to a fantastic 2017!

Claudia McVie, Chief Executive, Tenovus Cancer Care, Cardiff.

HIGH TIDE TIMES (UNTIL JANUARY 12)

The high tides listed in this week's GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary.

For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 – 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time	Ht	Time	Ht
	AM	M	PM	M
05 Thur	10.59	8.9	23.28	8.5
06 Fri	11.58	8.4		
07 Sat	00.34	8.3	13.13	8.4
08 Sun	01.49	8.3	14.14	8.5
09 Mon	02.59	8.7	15.35	8.8
10 Tues	04.07	8.7	16.37	8.9
11 Wed	05.02	9.1	17.32	9.2
12 Thur	05.55	9.4	18.18	9.5

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should check with a tide table specific to their location.

We abide by the code of practice upheld by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). This contains provisions for issues such as accuracy.

If you have a complaint, write to us at the address below, left, or call editorial manager Don John on 01446 774484. All complaints will be fully investigated.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may wish to contact IPSO, Gate House, 1 Farringdon Street, London EC4M 7LG Website: www.ipso.co.uk. Tel: 0300 123 2220. E-Mail: complaints@ipso.co.uk. Enquiries: inquiries@ipso.co.uk.

COR BRO OGWR – making a joyful noise for Christmas!

FROM slow and serious to light and sparkling, Cor Bro Ogwr's Christmas concert presented the audience at All Saints' Church, Porthcawl, with music to delight all tastes.

The opening 'Christmas Cantata' by Daniel Pinkham was accompanied by a brass quintet of young students from The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, who then went on to play a selection of well-known Christmas music put together for brass, by John Iveson. He called it 'Christmas Crackers' and it certainly lived up to its name.

The main piece of the first half was Benjamin Britten's 'A Ceremony of Carols', with harpist Angharad Edwards joining our accompanist Glenn Crooks on the organ.

The opening piece, 'Procession', was sung by our two soloists, Catrin Raymond and Grace Wyatt, who started singing at the back of the church and proceeded down the aisle, raising hairs on the back of the audience's neck.

The final piece, also sung by the soloists, had them returning to the back of the church, their voices fading away beautifully. This was a challenging piece for



singers and harpist; Angharad's fast fingering was most impressive.

The second half of the programme featured Welsh and English carols, some with a twist; 'Jazz Carols' by contemporary composer Will Todd and a version of 'Tua Bethel Dref' which conductor Rosie Howarth married with a very familiar accompaniment from 'Walking through the Air'. Yes, it worked their support!

Soloists and harpist delighted us with their own chosen pieces, and the evening ended with everyone joining in 'Hark, The Herald Angels Sing'.

PACT meetings

BETTWS PACT meets today (January 5) at Bettws Life Centre at 2pm.

LLANGEINOR PACT will be held on Wednesday, January 18 at The Richard Price Centre at 5.30pm.

BLAENGARW/PONTYCYMER PACT will be held on Tuesday, January 24 at The Halfway, Blaengarw Rugby Club at 6pm.

BLACKMILL PACT will be held on Monday, January 30 at Blackmill Community Centre at 6pm.

ABERKENFIG/PEN-Y-FAI PACT will be held on Monday, January 30 at Smyrna Chapel at 7pm.

This was our first concert with new conductor, Rosie Howarth, and it was a most enjoyable, colourful evening. A lively, varied programme, talented students from the RWCMD – night to remember. We were delighted to see the mayors of Porthcawl and Bridgend Town, Bridgend County and their respective partners. We always appreciate their support.

Our thanks go to Canon Masson, who always makes us welcome and who mans the interval bar which warms the audience too. Thanks also to the backstage and front-of-house helpers.

Rehearsals for our spring concert started on January 4, at Tabernacle Church, Derwen Road, Bridgend.

New members are always welcome. Why not make singing your New Year's Resolution? Drop in for a taster and see how good it makes you feel! For more information, go to www.cor-bro-ogwr.com. **DOMINIQUE SPEAREY**



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Local businesses get together for some festive networking

LOCAL business people recently attended the Bridgend Business Forum's (BBF) annual Christmas networking lunch at the Coed-y-Mwstwr Hotel, Coyauchurch. BBF, supported by Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC), is now in its eighth year. With more than 750 members, it promotes collaborative working within the local business community.

BBF chair and managing director at KKSolutions, Ian Jessopp, thanked guests at the event for their continued support of the forum and highlighted some key achievements from the last year, said: "We've had yet another fantastic 12 months, delivering 25 business events and bringing quality guest speakers and experts to the county borough.

"One of our main highlights again this year was hosting the annual Bridgend Business Forum Awards in September. The awards continue to grow and allow us to give recognition to local business success. For further information on the Bridgend Business Forum visit: www.bridgendbusinessforum.co.uk or follow the forum on Twitter @Bridgendforum.

Royal visit for local green award winners



IT was quite a day when Prince

Charles came to visit Coedcae Services near Rhiwceiliog, to see the work of the local woodland management company, which recently won the Prime Cymru Green Business Award.

The owner, David Marchant, showed his royal visitor the range of operations, which include production of biomass for green-energy boilers, finished timber products for sale, and of course woodland management services.

Huw Irranca-Davies AM for Ogmore, reported: "I am delighted for David and Coedcae Services. His success as a green business has been recognised with a prestigious award this year, which has been topped off by this royal visit.

"Prince Charles was clearly impressed by the way this business works with nature to deliver environmental benefits and jobs, and also helps sustain the local economy," the AM added.

Family's donation to hospital in memory of mum



ABOVE: Linda and Gillian Thomas with the new equipment.

A MAESTEG family the department and hope visited the Emergency it will particularly department at the benefit its frail, elderly Princess of Wales patients. Hospital to hand over Assistant general a new piece of manager for emergency equipment, donated medicine, Lesley Hopkins, said: "We are very grateful to Mrs

Linda Thomas and Spiller's family and her sister Gillian friends for this donation. Thomas, along with family and friends, when we receive gifts donated money for a like this from patients new testing machine. Their mother, Mary Spiller, had been a patient at the hospital before her death last May. The sisters assured it will be put to good use by our donated the machine to staff."

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GREAT FAMILY EVENT HAD A FANTASTIC TURN-OUT – DESPITE POOR WEATHER

PHOTOGRAPHS by GLYN EVANS

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Spokesperson from the swim committee, Wendy Richards, said: "We are delighted with the fantastic turn out today, considering the poor weather prior to the start."

"The swim is a great family event with many different generations of the same family taking to the sea. Many were in fancy dress with lots who followed the organisers theme and dressed as All Things Christmas."

"The atmosphere all around the swimmers is very special and hard to explain. I look forward each year to meeting old friends, many who I only see perhaps at the 'Swim' and we exchange Christmas greeting, sometimes up to our waist in the sea!"

"Once again, we have been grateful to all who supported our swim and the number of people who turned up was fantastic, especially considering the wet conditions."

"Collections are made during the swim and we hope the bucket collections and swimmers sponsorship will help us to make some generous donations in the New Year. Our main beneficiary this year is 'LATCH' (the Welsh children's cancer charity), we will also help local charities and organisations."

As a small committee, we are delighted with the way we have been supported once again this year. I would like to thank all swimmers, spectators, individuals, sponsors, businesses, fellow 'Buckaneers' and organisations, who help in so many ways to make the swim such a successful event in the town's calendar.

Dave King, Swim Chairman.



Popular butcher's shop raided by thieves just before Christmas

by GEM REPORTER

POPULAR Vale business 'Mark Griffith Butchers', at Camms Corner, Dinas Powys was burgled over-night, on December 22-23, with stock worth thousands of pounds and charity boxes stolen.

The owner Mark discovered that thieves had raided his premises when he arrived early for work on Friday, December 23.

He said: "I got in for work as normal at 5am and found the shop had been ransacked.

"Stock worth between £1,500 and £2,000 was taken along with charity boxes which were full.

"A tips box containing £500, donated by customers, was also taken."

Go to the **Glamorgan GEM** website for the latest stories and breaking news...

www.glamorgan-gem.co.uk



ABOVE: *Mark Griffith Family Butcher was targeted by thieves just before Christmas.*

Among the items of stock taken were turkeys, chickens, steaks and choice cuts meant for local people.

This year Mark and the staff had put out charity boxes for Ty Hafan, MS, Marie Curie and Voluntary Concern. Most of them were full, and they were taken too.

It was his final day of trading before the festive break.

By 12.30pm, he had managed to get new stock delivered and decided to trade until late that day.

Mark, who has traded in Dinas Powys for 39 years, and knows many of his customers by name, was devastated by the turn of events.

If anyone has any information they should contact Crimestoppers FREE on 0800 555 111.

Ogmore AM welcomes Brynmenyn school cash

OGMORE AM, Huw Irranca-Davies, has commented on the Welsh Government

announcement that over £4 million of new funding has been earmarked to relocate Brynmenyn Primary school in the Bridgend area.

"This will add to the unprecedented investment in school facilities in the area over the last decade," he said.

"The original building built in 1913 does not have a playing field and has 172 children and 29 nursery pupils. This new project will cost over £8 million in total with the Labour-led Bridgend Borough

Council providing the rest, allowing the new school to accommodate more pupils and 60 nursery places.

"This very much welcomed investment in a school in my constituency is part of the £1.4 billion '21st Century Schools and Education Programme' aiming to update school buildings across Wales.

"Again, it shows our government's commitment to education and it's also good to hear that around £50 million of investment in total has been earmarked for Bridgend county through this programme, half of which will come from the Welsh Government," the AM added.

Insight into Civil War

IN what has been a very busy year, the members of Pen-y-Fai WI embarked on their final trip to Llancaich Fawr manor in Nelson at the beginning of the month.

They were given a very warm welcome, and after a short coffee break, the tour began. The wonderful guides (who were all in character) gave insights into the life at the manor during the Civil War.

After giving a vote of thanks to the staff, the members were treated to a lovely tea in the beautifully located dining room. There were more than enough sandwiches, scones, savoury tarts, cakes and tea and coffee to satisfy everyone. Before setting off for home the ladies spent some time in the gift shop which had a good supply of Welsh products.

The visit certainly proved a tonic on a miserable, damp and cold winter's

day.

At the usual monthly meeting on December 19, there was a summary of notices and acknowledgements before the Christmas party began. A special surprise to start the evening was a young lady named Cassie John (16), of Port Talbot.

She entertained us with her beautiful voice and sang a mix of Christmas carols and popular modern Christmas songs, as well some of our favourites from the musicals, such as *Les Misérables*.

After a vote of thanks there followed a wonderful buffet to which all members had contributed, which did not take long to disappear and was well appreciated.

The next meeting will take place on January 16, when members are reminded that yearly subs will be due.

SHEILA DAVID

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Service of dedication held for school's new keyboard



A SERVICE of dedication was held at Oldcastle School, Bridgend, on December 8 to dedicate the new keyboard, presented to Bridgend Male Choir by its president, Paul Porter, in memory of his late mother, Peggy Porter.

Paul was born in Cardiff and is a long time follower of Bridgend Male Choir since moving to Bridgend in 1982. Until his recent retirement he was proprietor of Porters Estate Agents of Bridgend.

The service was conducted by the choir by its chairman, Gareth Davies. MC

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Maesteg Male Voice Choir

ON Saturday, February 4 the choir will hold their 42nd annual concert at the Town Hall in Maesteg.

The concert will commence at 7pm and it is hoped a full house will enjoy a varied programme of music by the choir and the soloists for the evening.

Guest soprano is Angharad Lisbeth Rees, who hails from Pontypridd and appeared with the choir in 2013.

Angharad is also an honorary member of the Gorsedd of Bards.

The bass will be Huw Euron from Cardiff, who is also a member of Only Men Aloud and the concert will be compered by BBC newsreader Rebecca John, whose father was a teacher at Maesteg Comprehensive.

This will be the 17th annual concert in which musical director Rhian Jenkins has led the choir, while new accompanist Laura Deenik will be making her debut.

Ryan Wood will also be appearing this evening as accompanist.

The price of admission has been kept at £8. Tickets available from choristers.

The choir rehearses on Thursday evenings between 7pm and 9pm at the Maesteg Celtic Rugby Club, Bridgend Road. Visitors and new members are always welcome.

Christmas gifts

THANKS to the overwhelming generosity of local people, hundreds of presents were donated to help brighten up Christmas for vulnerable children.

Bridge FM, Brynteg Comprehensive School,

and Hafod Y Wenvol, all dropped off gifts to Bridgend County Borough Council, after organising separate toy appeals, and distributed them to underprivileged children.

Members of staff at Hafod y Wenvol in the Vale of Glamorgan, an assessment and treatment unit for adults with learning disabilities, went the extra mile this Christmas by getting their friends and family on board to donate presents for children of all ages.

Finally, as part of their 'Santa Appeal', which has been running for 22 years, kind-hearted pupils from Brynteg Comprehensive School raised a whopping £3,200 by organising an array of activities, such as: selling sweets, sponsored walks, bake sales, a 'carolathon', and bag packing at Sainsbury's. The money raised by the mini-Santas was used to buy Christmas presents for 109 children and young people across the county borough.

The presents were delivered to the council offices courtesy of Apsee Removals, where the Brynteg pupils were waiting to hand-deliver the gifts themselves.

In brief

B R A C K L A Community Chorus welcomes new members at the rehearsals resuming on Wednesday, January 11 from 7pm to 9pm at Brackla Community Centre.

For further information, telephone Mr Roger Jones, the secretary on 01656 861095.

ALL residents from Communities First postcode areas are invited to an accredited emergency first aid

NORTH BRIDGEND NEWS

A message for all readers in the north of Bridgend who would like to have items included in the community news columns of The GEM:

If you wish to submit reports on any social activity in this region, please contact me.

I am very approachable and will endeavour to include every newsworthy subject.

Contact details: CLIVE MITCHELL

1 Tyn-Y-Coed Close, Sarn, Bridgend CF32 9NQ

TEL: 01656 725399

email: tyncoed1@yahoo.co.uk



The 15 – 18 section : Mitchell Rhys Davies (Porthcawl), Megan Grace Jones (St Martins Comp), Matthew Daly (Bryntirion), Holly Davies (St John the Baptist, CI Wales), Martha Watkins (Cynfig), Llinois Haf Jones (Ysgol Bro Morganwg), Tessa Webber (Porthcawl), Lucy Viner (Porthcawl), Charlotte Adams (Cowbridge).

The Gleemen rehearse on Monday and Thursday evenings from 7pm to 8.30pm at the Royal British Legion club, Commercial Street. Visitors and new members are welcome. L A L E S T O N Gardening Club meets at the Blandy Hall Cliff Cottage by the church.

It has a thriving ladies' section which meets on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 7.30pm.

On Monday, January 9 there will be a lecture by Joyce and Richard Penn on how to prepare your garden for entry in the National Gardens scheme.

The club has been holding a coffee morning in aid of Macmillan cancer support since 1996, and so far has raised over £11,000 in aid of this worthwhile charity.

I wish everyone a happy and prosperous New Year.

course at Nyngawdre community centre on Thursday, January 12 from 9.15am to 3pm, with lunch provided.

REACH, which delivers the rural development programme in Bridgend, is organising a craft event 'Made in Penybont' for Thursday, February 23 at the Tondu Wesley Centre.

This is an opportunity to gain the essential skills needed to give safe, prompt and effective first aid in an emergency situation.

Entry level 2 fire safety awareness course at Bettws Life Centre on Monday, January 16 from 9.15am – 3pm; a free lunch will be provided.

Develop your knowledge and skills in fire safety and learn all about the vital role of a fire warden.

Advance booking required by calling Jenny on 01656 643693 / 07815 525017.

TENOVUS choir rehearses on Monday evenings at Tabernacle Chapel, Derwen Road, Bridgend and welcomes new members.

The choir is willing to perform in concerts

The finals are in the town hall on Saturday, March 25.

Throughout the Bridgend CBC area, to raise money for research for Ténovus cancer care.

The winner of each category will receive the Bryan Davies Trophy and a prize to the value of £400, made up as follows: £100 personal cheque and a voucher for £400 to further music education within his/her school, along with a personal trophy.

The runners-up in each category will receive a personal prize of £50 and a voucher for £50 to further music education within his/her school groups – whatever their craft – to see if they could be involved.

The following children are in the 11 – 14 section: Megan

DUNRAVEN Welsh

young singer

Prance (Porthcawl), Sophie Louise Thomas

(Maesteg), Millie Stables

(Porthcawl), Tom

Gleemen male choir, is

Herbert (Ysgol

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If you would like any further information about Milo, call us on 01656 725219 or visit the website.

RC

The long stay patients need help to combat boredom...

THE Board of Community Health Councils in Wales has today published a report calling on Local Health Boards to do more to alleviate boredom and loneliness for older people experiencing lengthy stays in hospital.

A national survey of older people staying in community hospitals identified the importance of access to books, newspapers, crafts and hand held devices such as phones and tablets to enable people to keep themselves occupied and stay in touch.

Wards without space organisations.

Go to the **Glamorgan GEM** website for the latest stories and breaking news... www.glamorgan-gem.co.uk

Panto cheque presented to Ty Hafan

Pictured left to right: Pam Alderman; Darren Payne; Matthew Tait; Alison Stallard, head of fundraising, Ty Hafan and Peter Ballantyne.

STAFF from Barratt Homes in south Wales were in the festive spirit when they presented local charity Ty Hafan with the proceeds from its fundraising efforts in 2016.

Chair of the Board of Community Health Councils in Wales Mutale Merrill said: "NHS staff should challenge themselves and learn from each other to ensure that no one experiencing a long hospital stay finds themselves in a barren ward environment with little to do and nobody to talk to."

The report makes a number of recommendations including better use of technology, space on wards for shared activity and closer links with third sector organisations.

A series of events has raised more than £12,000 for the charity which aims to meet all the needs of life-limited children.

Events included staff successfully tackling the Welsh Three Peaks challenge and a charity golf day. "The support from staff has been tremendous with everyone really keen to take part or support the fundraising events to raise as much as possible for such an amazing charity."

Barratt Homes managing director Steve Williams said: "Every year the staff run a number of charity events for local causes and we're thrilled to have topped the £12,000 mark this year and the pantomime was the perfect opportunity to present the charity with the proceeds."

Natalie Whyatt, corporate partnership manager from Ty Hafan commented: "On behalf of all the staff and families at Ty Hafan, I'd like to thank Barratt Homes for their generosity and hard work in fundraising for us.

"It was also fantastic to see them join in with the fun at our Christmas pantomime. The money they have raised will make a world of difference to life-limited children, young people, and their families."



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Looking back over 2016... and looking forward to 2017

I would like to begin by wishing all readers a Happy and Peaceful New Year.

Last year was a difficult year in many respects, with austerity remaining an issue throughout the country and the implications of a Brexit vote and Donald Trump being elected as President of the USA still to take effect. Let's hope that things begin to improve and the effects of the above are not going to be too onerous.

On a brighter note, and despite all the issues we faced last year, we were very successful in many areas. I know that many of my political opponents and the usual people who constantly challenge the council don't like me saying so, but the facts speak for themselves... We have been extremely successful and continue to be the best performing council in Wales.

Therefore, as is customary, I am going to use my New Year column to revisit some of the high points of the last 12 months, before looking ahead to what's in store for the Vale in 2017.

However, before I do so, I'd like to clear up any confusion that may have been caused by the last issue of the Gem (December 22, 2016) in which a column written

by Ogmore MP Christopher Elmore was incorrectly attributed to me. Although Chris and I share many views and opinions and have striven to achieve all that the Labour Party believe in, I cannot claim some of the things in his column like representing the views of the people of Bridgend in Westminster! I know that there was a genuine mistake made and the GEM has apologised to both of us. So, without further ado, here are my highlights from what was a very exciting 2016 for the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

One of our key areas of focus at the Vale of Glamorgan Council is always education, and 2016 saw the work of previous years bear fruit and even greater investment planned for the future, although the success was marred by the sad death of our Director of Learning and Skills, Jennifer Hill.

She is greatly missed by her friends and colleagues, but her legacy is plain for all to see and highlighted below.

The year started with some very good news for pupils, when our schools were rated as some of the best in Wales; almost half were placed in the top group, a figure that had more than doubled since January 2015. This news came in the same

month that the Vale of Glamorgan was found by Estyn to have made the highest levels of progress possible since 2013 and meant that it was no surprise to anyone in the Civic Offices when pupils in the Vale recorded their best ever A-Level and GCSE results in August.

Pupils were again the focus of attention in March when First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones, officially opened the Penarth Learning Community (PLC), the £50 million home of St Cyres Comprehensive School and Ysgol Y Deri special school in Penarth.

The PLC has been an undeniable success since it opened to pupils in 2015 and this was borne out in the excellent inspection report received by Ysgol Y Deri as the year drew to a close last December. We expect that there will be similar success for us all to celebrate in 2017.

Following on from the redevelopment in Penarth, my cabinet colleagues and I are due to open the new Llanwit Learning Community in the first half of the year.

We also expect the proposed £19 million investment into Ysgol Bro Morgannwg, coupled with a £44 million investment into two new English medium secondary

VIEW FROM THE VALE



by Coun
**NEIL
MOORE**
Leader of the
Vale of
Glamorgan
Council

schools in Barry should follow, depending upon further funding from Welsh Government.

Those of you that live in the Vale of Glamorgan will be well aware that we boast a huge number of parks and public spaces in the county and a new area of focus for the council's regeneration work in 2016 has been bringing many of these up to a higher standard.

As a result, the council has been recognised for its efforts and achieved seven Green Flag Awards in this year's Keep Wales Tidy awards, quite an achievement and all down to the tremendously hard work of our staff.

Apart from the larger gardens and parks, we have invested in our smaller, but no less important, play areas. These included the play areas at the Colcot, George Street, Maslin Park, along with the dog-free park and play

area at the Hatch Quarry in Cadoxton Village, which reopened to the public after a six figure council investment in March. In June we announced that four parks in Penarth would be given a new lease of life as part of the same programme of work.

Then, in October, plans were announced plans that will see Gladstone Gardens and the play areas at Salisbury Road in Barry and the Cliff Top in Penarth receive the same treatment. This work is set to continue in 2017, so watch this space to find out if your local park is next on this list.

We learned last year that nearly four million tourists made a beeline for the Vale of Glamorgan during 2015, an increase of more than 5 per cent on the previous year. This is evidence (if anyone needed it) that tourism will always be of great importance to the Vale and so in 2016 the

council continued to work to enhance its resorts and bring in more visitors.

One of the reasons for the increase in numbers was almost certainly the regeneration of Barry Island. This continued apace in 2016 and in April the council played its part in the launch of an open-top bus service that ran throughout the summer between the Island, the Knap and the centre of Barry. In May, we saw Whitmore Bay (along with Penarth Marina) pick up a Blue Flag Award for the quality of the bathing water and then we saw the year-long rentals for the, now iconic, beach huts sell out in a matter of hours.

In June, we made it possible for visitors to keep up with the Wales football team's progress in the Euros without leaving the sand, as the Island became the first beach in the country to offer free Wi-Fi to visitors. We expect more of the same across

all of the council's resorts in 2017, as we seek to bring even more people to locations across the Vale and onto the doorsteps of the local businesses and traders that thrive on their custom.

Other highlights of 2016 for me have been the success of the community libraries, albeit there remains work to complete the transformation. This progress was coupled with the opening of the new adult education learning hub at Barry Library. I was also pleased to earmark a significant £2million investment into Vale leisure centres.

As I'm sure is clear from this column, I am hugely proud of all that was achieved in 2016, the year that also saw the Vale of Glamorgan Council ranked as the highest performing local authority in Wales for the second year running and receive a glowing assessment from the Wales Audit Office. Of

course, it has to be said that this has been achieved, not only through the policies and commitment of this council's Labour / Llanwit First cabinet, but because of the dedication of our management team and staff in every directorate. So from me, a heartfelt and warm 'Thank You' to all concerned. A council can only be as good as its workforce and we certainly have the best team here in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Finally, it is clear that 2017 will certainly bring fresh challenges and changes, but looking back at all that has been achieved in the last 12 months and since 2012, I am sure that the Vale of Glamorgan Council will continue to work with residents in all of our towns and villages to make the county an even better place to live, work and visit in 2017.

Once again, I wish everyone a very Happy and Peaceful New Year.

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Local people receive honours in the Queen's New Year list

A NUMBER of residents of the Vale and Bridgend county boroughs featured in the Queen's New Year Honours List.

The historian and broadcaster, Professor Dai Smith, who lives in

Barry, received a CBE for services to arts and culture in Wales.

Four people received MBEs. They were:

• Dennis Jones from Bridgend, who was nominated for his services to Citizens Advice Bureau and the community in Bridgend. Now 91 years of age, Mr Jones has been dispensing advice on behalf of the CAB for more than 25 years.

Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns described him as an "inspiration to us all".

• Ms Margaret Ellen Matthews, formerly the managing director of Dow Corning in Barry, received her MBE for services to the community in Cowbridge and Llanblethian.

The nomination made particular mention of her work with young people

to the elderly.

OXFAM MUSIC SALE

THE Oxfam shop in Penarth will hold a half-price music sale on Saturday, January 7 from 9am including vinyl, CDs, DVDs, music books and sheet music.

Caroline Mumford, shop manager, said: "We are grateful to everyone who has donated goods and to our loyal customers.

"Vinyl has been popular this autumn and we are holding the sale to make space for new stock. We now put all our collectible items on the shelves as soon as possible."

The Oxfam shop plans to extend its vinyl range. Anyone with vinyl of any genre that they would like to donate can drop it in at 8a Windsor Road, Penarth. Large collections can be picked up. More information on 02920 706358

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Bev 07912 172674

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and 11.30am
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Lane East, Llanwit Major
Helen 01446 750738/
07968 355119

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Joanne 01446 404897

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Linda 01446 761150/
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All Saints Church Hall,
Victoria Square, Penarth
Linda 01446 761150/
07809 901008

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5.30pm and 7.30pm
Talbot Community Centre,
Kenfig Hill
Millie 07765 040006

Thursdays 10.15am

St Helen's Church Hall,

Wyndham Street, Barry

CF63 4EL

Nicola 01446 740394

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and 7.30pm
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07968355119

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Sully CF64 5TG
Nicola 01446 740394

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and 7.30pm
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Wednesday 6.00pm
Cadotown Methodist
Church, Church Road, Barry
Joanne 01446 404897

Wednesday 4.45pm
and 6.45pm
St Francis Millennium
Centre, Park Road,
Porth-Y-Castell, Barry
Annamarie 01446 736534

Thursdays 5.30pm
and 7.30pm
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Dinas Powys
Linda 01446 761150/
07809 901008

Saturdays 8am and 10am
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Mawr Road, Bridgend
Rachael 07809 626285

Saturdays 7.30am,
9.30am and 11.30am
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Martin 07827 445570

Sundays 9.30am
The Cabin (Next to Swim
Pool), Rear of Hebron Hall,
Cross Common Road,
Dinas Powys
Linda 01446 761150/
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Nicola 01446 740394

Sundays 10.15am

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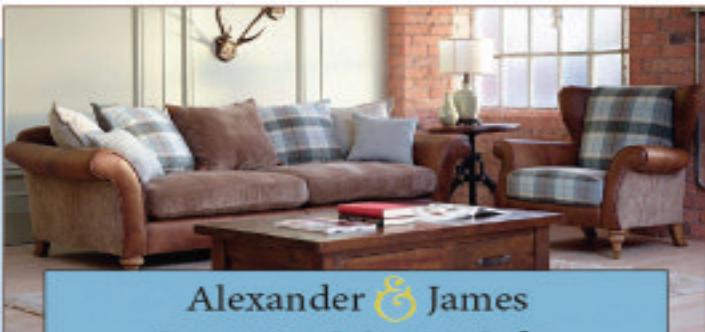
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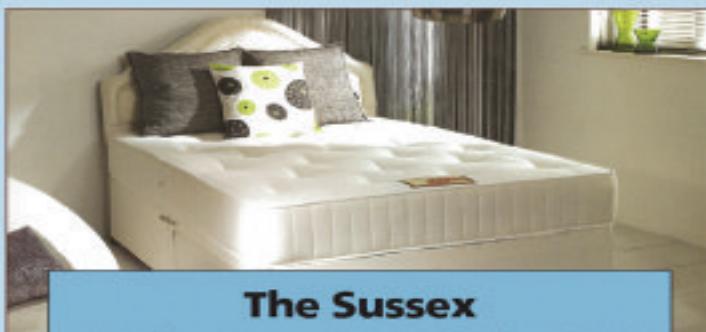
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As iconic year ends, challenging times ahead

by CHRIS ELMORE,
MP for Ogmore

FIRSTLY, before I start my main column, I hope that everyone has had a wonderful Christmas and I hope you all enjoyed the New Year's festivities.

The old one has come to an end, a year which had some iconic moments, to say the least – the seemingly endless number of celebrity deaths, the Welsh Assembly election, and the Referendum, which saw the UK vote to leave the EU...

...All news stories that have implications on our lives, and all will be what 2016 is remembered for, one way or another.

During 2016, I opened a new foodbank in the constituency (something you may have read in a previous edition of The GEM).

Obviously, to open a service that is needed is a pleasure. The difficulty, however, was that a foodbank is needed in the community at all.

Something isn't working in our society if people are unable to feed themselves. Something isn't working when these foodbanks are a lifeline to so many people.

Something needs to change and we should all, as compassionate humans, be ashamed that these institutions

exist.

That said, they are needed, and I'm so grateful and thankful that these volunteers give up so much of their time to help those most vulnerable.

Looking forward – 2017 has many challenges. The main one that springs to mind is that of what a Brexit Britain looks like.

I led a Westminster Hall debate on the impact of leaving the EU on businesses in Wales.

I was disappointed that the UK Government refused to answer on whether they would guarantee to replace EU funding that has not yet been underwritten by the Treasury.

No did I get an answer on what steps will be taken to ensure there is not a training shortage in Wales, once we've left the day.

These are guarantees businesses need to plan for the future and I hope the Government becomes more transparent about it.

I'm not expecting a blow-by-blow account to the Brexit negotiations; however, I do expect transparency on something so important.

I wish all constituents a peaceful and healthy new year.

This reprinted article by Chris Elmore MP appeared in our December 22 issue under an incorrect byline.

Friends help to fundraise for Velindre!

RIGHT: Rachel Hammacott and friends with the cheque for Velindre Cancer Care.

RACHEL HAMMACOTT and her friends have helped to raise a fantastic £730 for Velindre Cancer Care at their recent Christmas party.

The charity is close to Rachel's heart as her mother Pam Hitchcock from Llantwit Major was diagnosed and treated for breast cancer recently through an early detection at the breast cancer mobile unit.

One of Rachel's friends, Pauline Woodward, has also undergone treatment this year and her daughter

Heather has taken action by signing up to a trek in Peru with comedian Rhod Gilbert and local weatherman Derek Brockway.

Heather was thrilled with the amount raised which will be going towards her £6,000 target to participate.

She is planning further fundraising events in the New Year, including a charity auction and an Elvis Presley evening, more information can be found

on <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Heather-Woodward3>

Ho-ho-helicopter

SANTA made a surprise visit to Ty Hafan – to deliver presents to children (with the help of the Wales Air Ambulance).

Families at the hospice in Sully were told there would be a Christmas party with games, food and a visit from someone extra special. But while some might have guessed Santa would be coming to join in the festive celebrations, they didn't expect him to arrive by helicopter.

Wales rugby star Leigh Halfpenny also visited fans at the hospice, based in Sully, and helped Santa hand out presents to add to the surprises of the day.

Angela Hughes, chief executive of Wales Air Ambulance, said: "The families at Ty Hafan had no idea Santa would be coming to see them, or that they'd be able to see our helicopter land right outside their windows, so it really was a surprise when he turned up with Leigh Halfpenny."

"The children were so excited to meet Santa and receive presents from him, especially as he made such a dramatic entrance by coming down from the sky.

"We are pleased to add a little bit of extra magic to families at Ty Hafan this Christmas."



A flying visit from Santa to the children at Ty Hafan.

Plans for old church opposed

COUN Rhona Probert will be speaking tonight (Thursday, January 5) at the Vale

Planning Committee meeting, against the proposal to turn the old United Reformed Church on Windsor Road into flats and offices, without including any parking on site.

She said: "I'm not against developing this site and saving the

building, but there's already a parking problem here and around the school, and on High Street and Broad Street, and to put in so many flats and offices without any off-road parking is completely unreasonable.

"I want to thank the WRAP Around group who have worked really hard to get the views of local residents across to the planners, and I congratulate them on the quality of their campaign."



Get Back on Track for a fresh start!

THE new year is a good time to think about making some changes, improving your skills and qualifications, look for a new job or simply to improve your confidence and self-esteem.

The Vale Council 'Get Back on Track' programme provides a wide variety of courses right across the Vale in partnership with other organisations.

The courses are free to those eligible and a free crèche is provided at some centres.

Courses take place in Barry at both Palmerston Community Learning Centre and at the new Vale Learning Centre on the first floor of the Barry Library.

You can also learn at a whole range of venues across the Vale including Jobcentres and libraries in Penarth and Llantwit and Community Centres in St Athan, Penarth and Rhoose.

There are a wide range of computer skills workshops on offer with the chance to learn the basic ICT skills that you will need in almost any workplace or you can progress to further ICT courses in Excel, web design or PC maintenance.

You can gain an Agored, OCR or even an ECDL qualification.

For jobseekers, weekly workclubs throughout the Vale are available to

support your job search and help with CVs and applications.

New courses in hairdressing and beauty and childcare and health and social care are an ideal stepping stone to further education and training.

Whether you are looking for employment or volunteering opportunities, there are a range of short 'Workwise' courses in hospitality, reception and customer service, and health and safety, while British Sign Language, communication and creative writing will give you the skills you need and enhance your CV.

'Get Back on Track' courses will help improve your confidence and self esteem and help you to consider your next step.

Reading, writing and maths are essential skills that help you get on in work and life in general. If you want to improve your skills or if you don't have any qualifications, then this is the place to start. Classes at all levels are available at the new Vale Learning Centre.

You can start at any time and attend when it suits you, either day or evening.

For more information on new courses starting in your local area, pick up a course list from Vale Council buildings or libraries; online at www.gbotfree.org or call the Palmerston centre on 01446 733762.

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Screen Talk's top ten films of 2016

IT'S been a funny old year, 2016. A year of sad loss, strange political decisions and general craziness, one of the only ways to deal with it was to hunker down in a darkened room and immerse yourself in the world of film.

Dashed lucky! Festive pup finds his new home

MANY people spent Christmas at home with families, but it was 'business as usual' for staff at the Dogs Trust Bridgend rehoming centre as they spent the festive season caring for a Dachshund pup handed in on Christmas Day.

The nine-week-old pup, named after the fictional reindeer Dasher, was handed in because his owners were sadly unable to keep him.

Dasher spent Christmas enjoying lots of fun and games at the centre, but lived up to his name and quickly found a new home.

Angela Wetherall, Dogs Trust Bridgend rehoming centre manager, said: "Christmas is always a really busy time for us, but we had staff on hand to take in the puppy and



Dasher.

care for him over the festive period. In this case, the owners acted responsibly by bringing him to us to find a home for him, but we see so many unwanted puppies simply abandoned because they were born as a result of the parents not being neutered.

"Neutering is hugely important to avoid situations like this occurring, and saves the heartbreak of giving up an unwanted litter when owners realise they are unable to care for them."

Yet again the blockbuster season had an underwhelming feeling to it, critically if not necessarily commercially, but overall it was a year of some golden films, the top ten of which have been assembled for your perusal – feel free to get in touch with your favourites via Twitter, @GEMScreenTalk.

So with a drum roll, and a sense of anticipation not seen since November's American election, let's dive headfirst into the top ten of 2016.

10. *Everyone Wants Some!!* – Richard Linklater's 1970s college-set comedy had a freewheeling style, likeable characters and an indefinable sense of fun, backed with one of the best soundtracks of the year. A blast of sunshine, undercut with a sense of making the most of your youth, Everybody should want some of this film!

9. *Captain America: Civil War* – Juggling more characters than you could shake a stick at, numerous plot strands that both

lingered from previous Marvel outings and set up future installments, *Civil War* had no right to be as lean, spritely and satisfying as it was. In a year where DC underperformed critically, Marvel reassured itself as the top dog with this wonderful film.

8. *Hunt For The Wilderpeople* – Taika Waititi's hilarious story of a foster child who, through circumstances, finds himself on the run with his foster father was hilarious and touching. Sam Neill was superb as the grouchy man saddled with his 'son', newcomer Julian Dennison incredible as the troubled youngster with a penchant for gangster chic – a must-see film.

7. *Anomalisa* – If you thought stop-motion was for youngsters only, *Anomalisa* was the film to change your mind. From the mind of Charlie Kaufman (who also co-directed with Duke Johnson), this story of mid-life crisis was indefinable, the presentation lending a fragile and beautiful wooziness to a film that spoke to the human condition.

6. *The Hateful Eight* – Quentin Tarantino's

chamber piece was a gory, funny and immensely watchable slice of cinema. Its narrative kept you guessing, the cast were on excellent form, and the director seemed as vital as ever in this grand-guignol Western.

5. *Room* – Lenny Abrahamson's compelling story cemented Brie Larson as one of the finest actresses working today and saw a truly exception performance from young Jacob Tremblay. The subject matter wasn't light (woman is kidnapped and left in the titular room with her son, fathered by the kidnapper) but Abrahamson deftly wound together a story that was oddly, yet compellingly, affirming.

4. *10 Cloverfield Lane* – Perhaps the biggest surprise of the year, this was a small-budget film called *Valencia*, but a name change later (and folding it into the *Cloverfield* universe) gave it a widespread release and one of the tensest, edge-of-your-seat films of the year.

A three-hander, with

stunning turns from Mary Elizabeth Winstead, John Gallagher Jr and a fearsome John Goodman, it was a film that got under your skin and stayed there.

3. *Hell Or High Water* – A rugged contemporary Western, this was a powerful film from director David Mackenzie, a slow-burning morality story where the actions of two bank-robbing brothers are met with a grudging acceptance and the officer on their tail is a grizzled and excellent Jeff Bridges. This well-worn tale was an incredible piece of filmmaking.

2. *Arrival* – Before *Arrival*, Denis Villeneuve had yet to make a poor film – his 100 per cent record continued after this affirming slice of sci-fi, an emotionally-engaging story of alien contact and personal sacrifice.

Anchored by Amy Adams' superb turn, *Arrival* may have benefited from being released in the slipstream of Donald Trump's victory, but it was a film that was smart and captivating,

exceptionally told. 1. *Spotlight* – Your Best Picture Oscar winner, and hugely deserved, *Spotlight* was a hard-hitting true-story tale of sexual abuse covered up, with a newspaper team bringing the truth, and the abusers, to justice. A true ensemble, led by the impeccable Michael Keaton, *Spotlight* was a powerful, dense viewing experience.



by
GARETH JAMIESON

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AN EMOTIVE MEETING FOR THE VALE'S YOUTH MAYOR



EMOJI students, the Youth Mayor, and Vale Council staff.

THE Youth Mayor of the Vale of Glamorgan, Daniel Marshall, a pupil at Cowbridge Comprehensive School, officially represented the Mayor at a presentation evening for the Youth Service.

The 'Emojo's project' is a 10-week course run in partnership with the Families First FACT team and the Vale Council's Youth Service.

The project is split into two groups, junior (eight to 12 years old) and senior (13-16 years old) and the

project aims to 'empower young people to express themselves and to build their confidence and self-esteem levels'.

The project is to help young people learn to 'disclose their feelings in a safe manner and enable them to form better relationships with peers and family members'.

"Young Daniel enjoyed the event very much and was very pleased to listen, share and discuss with the young people their experiences of the group," a spokesperson reported..

Aviation group to hear all about naval power

ON December 6, the Penarth Aviation Society held its annual Christmas social at the Penarth Conservative Club, when an excellent evening's entertainment was enjoyed by all.

Our next meeting will be held on Friday (January 6), when PAS member Ed Oliver, a former chief petty officer with the Fleet Air Arm, will be giving a talk entitled 'Flying off the Sea - The Early Years' in which we will be taken back over 100

years to the days when the idea of flying itself was new, let alone flying off ships!

Naval power in those far off days consisted of the Dreadnought style of vessel, where one huge ship hurled massive shells at equally large enemy ships.

Getting a better view of your opponent's fleet was crucial – hence, as with the Royal Flying Corps over the battlefields of France, getting a better view over the horizon was paramount.

Conditions for the pilots were difficult to say the least, but without these valiant pioneers, modern fleets with the flexibility given by the aircraft carrier would be vastly different and far less efficient.

The meeting will take place at Penarth Conservative Club at 7:45pm for 8pm.

Why not join the society? We meet on the first Friday of the month at the Penarth club. Visitors are welcome to attend.

Further information may be found on our website at: www.penarthaviationsociety.co.uk and Facebook page www.facebook.com/penarthaviationsociety.co.uk

DE

MUSIC in the Vale annual competition has held a pre-Christmas concert in Holy Cross Church, Cowbridge, with young people (aged eight to 23), who had won special recognition at their competition in November at Stanwell School, Penarth.

The concert was sponsored by Watts and Morgan Estate Agents, Cowbridge, and their help was very much appreciated by Music in the Vale, as it gave performance opportunities to the very talented young musicians and singers that Wales is producing.

A past winner of Music in the Vale's

annual competition has

proved how important these performance opportunities are to young people embarking on a musical career. Ben Tarlton delighted the audience with his classical interpretation of the 'Boccherini Sonata' and Tchaikovsky's 'Valse Sentimentale'.

Since winning Music in the Vale's competition, Ben has attended the Yehudi Menuhin School and won a scholarship to Guildhall in London.

Peter Greenwood, playing the tuba, joined Ben in a seasonal duet.

Further details of the next concert in January, may be found on the website at: www.penarthaviationsociety.co.uk and Facebook page www.facebook.com/penarthaviationsociety.co.uk

uk.

SUE TAYLOR

Divas make it a musical show to cherish

IT was the largest gathering of Welsh divas for some time – and it proved to be a musical event that will be celebrated for a long time to come.

If you weren't there at Venue Cymru, Llandudno for the great spectacular, featuring 10 of Wales' foremost sopranos and mezzo sopranos, you can enjoy all the glamour and great music on S4C in the show *Cyngor y 10* Diffa on Sunday, 8 January.

The ten divas who came to Llandudno just before Christmas, included Ellen Williams from Bridgend, plus a full symphony orchestra led by conductor Andrew Greenwood.

Digital stories offer views on children of service personnel

TWO powerful films and a bank of digital stories were launched in November at the Pierhead, Cardiff Bay, to raise awareness of what life is like for children of those serving in HM Armed Forces in Wales.

The films have been made by pupils, parents and staff at Llanwit Major High School and Prendergast Community Primary School with support from the Ministry of Defence, the Army Families Federation, Rhondda



Ellen Williams from Bridgend.

The Ten Divas event follows the success of the Ten Tenors concert last Christmas at Venue Cymru.

Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Storyworks UK.

The initiative has been coordinated by the Welsh Local Government Association's Supporting Service Children in Education Cymru project.

Storyworks UK also ran workshops with pupils that would allow them to share their own stories about what it's like to have a parent in the Armed Forces, these workshops were then turned into a bank of two minute digital stories capturing the children's experiences.

All the films will be available on the project website www.ssccymru.co.uk

'A Monster Calls' is majestic, emotional, and very powerful

DIRECTOR J A Bayona has impressed since breaking through with Spanish-language thriller *The Orphanage* in 2007. His take on the 2004 tsunami disaster, *The Impossible*, proved he could handle spectacle and emotion, perfect training for his latest film, *A Monster Calls*, based on Patrick Ness' book.

It tells the story of Conor (Lewis MacDougall), a boy whose mother (played by Felicity Jones) is terminally ill, and who is forced to live with his less-than-pleasant grandma (Sigourney Weaver).

With his home life stretched to breaking point, and his school life no better, Conor seeks comfort in a monster (voiced by Liam Neeson), and begins to process his feelings with the help of the monster...

A film about a boy visited by a talking, walking tree should be something that you find in a children's story – however, *A Monster Calls'* subject matter is hardly the most kiddie-friendly material. That, though, is not a problem in the slightest, in a film that speaks to all, regardless of age, and a story that tugs and pulls at the heartstrings throughout.

Director J A Bayona's previous film, *The Impossible*, was one that hit the notes of mawkishness a little too often, but it's a charge that can't be levied at this film, Bayona

orchestrating proceedings with a sure and firm hand.

He wastes no time in establishing the key tenets of the story, and thanks to a screenplay by Patrick Ness (adapting his own book with aplomb) which is tightly written, you are instantly hurtled into the world of young Conor. Bullied at school, and dealing with his mother's cancer, the character is one full of rage and anger, and Lewis MacDougall brings him to life exceptionally well.



by GARETH JAMIESON

Follow Screen Talk on Twitter – @GEMScreenTalk

It's a performance that is never showy or overstated, but pitched beautifully, and as Conor's relationship with the monster and his mother's illness deteriorates,

MacDougall fills Conor with hard-fought sympathy and emotion. It's a well-cast film, with Felicity Jones equally as impressive as Conor's mother, her love for him shining in the darkest of moments, while Liam Neeson's mellifluous tones fit the role of the monster down to the ground.

The likes of Sigourney Weaver and Toby Kebbel round out an excellent cast, but it's MacDougall who lingers the longest, Conor never outplaying the victim despite the circumstances that surround him.

Patrick Ness' book came from an idea by Siobhan Dowd, a writer who sadly succumbed to cancer before Ness' book came out, but you can see from the film the impact the idea had, the portrayal of cancer and those suffering from it,

both directly and indirectly, is unflinchingly portrayed and not given short shrift by Bayona in the director's chair.

The Spanish director's decision to not soft-soak any element of this story means that the visceral finds itself rubbing up against the fantasy, but Bayona's full-on commitment leaves neither element short, with the sequences involving the monster stunningly realised, while the 'three stories' element is given a different feel using watercolour animation, giving the film another texture.

It's the way the film slowly builds towards the climax, the way strands and elements fit inside one another, that is *A Monster Calls'* strength – Bayona and Ness weave together these elements to make something majestic and beautiful, heart-wrenching and emotional. The result is an absolute triumph of a film.

VERDICT: A film that straddles the line between fantasy and the harsh realities of life, *A Monster Calls* is an incredibly powerful and moving piece of work. The cast, especially lead Lewis MacDougall, are excellent, while J A Bayona's direction is both intimate and expansive. Pulling the heartstrings without overcooking the sentiment, this is a film that will linger with you. *Essential viewing.*

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED: *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006), *Coraline* (2009).

TOYS AND TRAINS

THE collectors' bonanza reaches then Vale when the toy and train sale arrives at Penarth Leisure Centre at Cogan between 10:30am and 3pm on Saturday, January 7. Three further dates have also been booked at this venue for 2017. Telephone 01643 702757 or 07966 694579, or visit www.chrisdyerfairs.co.uk for more information.

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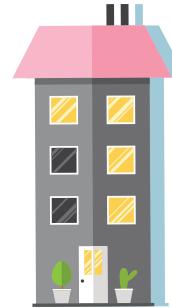
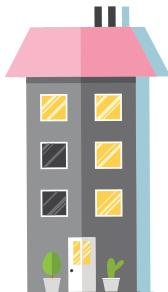
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Agency's festive hampers for the vulnerable and the elderly



ABOVE: Anne Lintern receives the donated hampers.
BELOW: staff with Jane Hutt AM.



A L L I E D Margaret Codd, in the Vale of Glamorgan branch manager explained: "We care for vulnerable, elderly clients on a daily basis and at this time of year it is sad to see clients who have no family or friends at Christmas. It made perfect sense that the carer event committee decided to raise donations to create Christmas hampers for vulnerable adults living

alone."

The committee decided to donate the hampers to Rondel House day centre to pass these on to those they felt the most vulnerable, which included clients who visit their centre or receive 'meals on wheels'.

On December 22, Anne Lintern, manager of Rondel House Day Centre, visited Allied Healthcare to receive the donated hampers. Jane Hutt AM also visited and was delighted with the work the committee had done in helping those this Christmas.

A further £45 was raised from a raffle, which will be donated to Age Connects, which supports thousands of local older people.

We wish to thank the staff for their donations and the committee for going beyond their duty of care to make this fantastic donation, in making vulnerable people feel less alone this Christmas.

We also wish to thank Aldi, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Spar, Waitrose, One Stop and Universal Hair Studios for their generous support to help us show the true meaning of Christmas - sharing is caring!

NT

ESME LOVES A FUSS AND A CUDDLE...



DOG OF THE WEEK is Esme, a five-year-old greyhound with lots of energy, who enjoys her time off the lead and mixes well with other dogs her size.

Esme's ideal home would be with people who have had dogs before, and she can live with children over eight years of age.

Esme loves a fuss and a cuddle and a game of chase - so if you are a fan of greyhounds, Esme could be the answer to your dreams!

If you would like further information, visit the Dogs Trust website, or call 01656 725219.

Memories of a Welsh childhood during Second World War

by TOM CLEMENTT

THE early 1940s were the most important part of the war for us, the children of Barry. This was the time when the Americans arrived and were stationed at a camp in Hayes Road, Sully.

Children from the surrounding area were often invited to their cinema shows, given sweets and chocolate and the inevitable chewing gum.

For adults in Barry (mainly female), their dances were very well patronised.

To us youngsters they seemed to have an abundant supply of everything that was rationed.

The first air raid on Barry was in April 1941. Houses at the west end of the town and a number in the Barry Road and Witchell Estate areas were hit.

During the raid, incendiary bombs rained down on Cadoxton Moors and at Porthkerry Park.

A few months later, a dog-fight over the channel between a Spitfire and a German plane could be seen from Victoria Park.

The German plane was shot down to the cheers of a group of parents and children who were watching the action taking place.

While living on the Moors one of the older boys, Joey Bunkham, used to boast that he had saved the houses on the Moors from being blown up.

It wasn't until a few years ago, that I found out that he was telling the truth and that he had never got the credit for it.

What happened was that during the raid on the Moors, incendiary bombs were dropped and a number landed on the top of the gasometer at the end of Laura Street. Joey and a friend climbed up onto the top of the structure and kicked the bombs onto the ground.

Another event in the '40s was the coming ashore at Barry Island of a ship carrying oranges and other foodstuffs.

It must have had a hold full of oranges - as well as being slightly bitter, they also tasted oily. It wasn't until after the war that we realised that all oranges weren't sour and didn't have an oily taste; the oranges that came ashore were destined for the manufacture of marmalade. After the Barry

Island incident, it was discovered that the destructor in Barry Road was being used to destroy tins of food from the camp at Sully.

These tins were either out of date, the labels had come off, or were suspected of being contaminated.

Every night the walls around the site were lined with youngsters awaiting their chance to acquire something from the yard. Tins of corned beef and SPAM were favourites.

If a seven pound tin of corned beef was acquired, it was corned beef hash, corned beef pasties, corned beef sandwiches for work, and finally, if any was left, into the soup it went to add a bit of flavour.

In another raid on Barry, landmines were dropped and two landed in the docks. One exploded killing a watchman on a ship being repaired in the dock; the other failed to explode but was recovered after the war and taken out in the direction of the wind.

If it was blowing from the Colcot area towards the docks and a raid was imminent, a battery of canisters would be placed near Romilly Schools; if the wind was coming off the sea, they would be situated at the docks.

Nearer D-Day, Another landed in Dock View Road and it wasn't until a long time after the war had finished that the buildings where it had landed were finally demolished.

A total of just over 20 raids took place during the war over Barry and its surrounding area. It was said that Barry had escaped the worst of the raids because Barry was to be the chosen port for the invasion of Britain!

As the war progressed, prisoners of war appeared in Barry. They were mainly in camps on the Port Road. There were Germans, Italians and Mongol troops.

The Italians, and later some Germans, were allowed to work on the local farms. They were picked up by lorry and dropped off at the farms; some later acquired bicycles and were allowed to make their own way back and forth.

The Mongolian POWs worked on the docks in Cardiff and were taken to work by lorry. After the war they were sent back to Russia, where it was said they were all executed.

D-DAY

Preparations for D-Day led to the build-up of troops in the area and equipment was stockpiled all around Barry.

More and more smoke screen canisters appeared around the town. These were lit at the onset of an air raid

and gave off a thick black oily smoke.

A large number were made at the Barry Enamel Works (Fellows, Chamberlin Ltd.) and after the war they were given the trade name 'Salamander' and modified to be used as a floating roadway at Normandy, allowing vehicles to be driven straight off the ships and on to the beach. It could also be used as a runway to allow the take-off and landing of air observation-post flights.

A few days before D-Day, the channel was alive with activity; Dock View Road and Victoria Park were two of the best vantage points.

Barry was one of the main Bristol Channel shipping ports for the invasion and over 20 ships left the port to take part in it. Tanks, guns and ammunition were constantly being loaded at the docks.

Barry was one of a small number of ports where explosives could be landed or loaded from the dockside. Any spare piece of ground was used to unpack tanks and other vehicles.

Brock Street Quarry had packing cases strewn all around it. Cadoxton Bowling Club asked for, and was given, many of them to re-build its pavilion, which is still in use with a lot of the same timber in it.

At the end of the war, Barry experienced the worst snowfall it had had for many years; trains, buses and nearly

all other forms of transport were halted, work stopped everywhere so that people could dig themselves out.

The local authority, with its limited resources, tried its best to dig the town out and clear the main roads of snow and get essential traffic moving.

After two days of being snowed in, the Americans who were stationed at Sully and who wanted to visit the Cardiff night spots, appeared with their bulldozers - and cleared the road from their camp to the Merrie Harrier in a matter of hours.

MEM BLAZE

On the way, they took out the hump-backed bridge on the Sully Moors Road that had been a bottleneck for years, they replaced it with a Bailey bridge that gave good service for a great many years.

The last event of any moment in the 1940s was the fire at the Memorial Hall on a Whit-Monday.

The hall was being used as a hospital at the time; patients and staff were safely moved out.

It took 15 years to repair the damage done by the fire.

Most of the time it was open to the elements and was liable to be demolished by a council, which didn't have the money or the will to repair it.

Eventually, the repairs were carried out and the hall was reopened by Alderman Rook in May 1957.

DON'T LAG BEHIND... Wrap up and pipe down this winter!

THE message to customers in Welsh Water's 'Wrap Up Wales' campaign is reminding people to make sure that the water pipes in their homes are protected to avoid the disruption and expense that can be caused by frozen pipes.

The campaign reminds people to protect their pipes from bursting and causing damage that could cost thousands of pounds. The problem is usually linked to pipes that are exposed to very low temperatures, such as those in garages, outhouses and attics.

The water in the pipes expands when it freezes, which can lead to bursting when the pipes thaw. Urgent and expensive repair is then needed to fix the problem.

A spokesperson for Welsh Water has helpfully pointed out that when a problem occurs on pipes in homes, it is the responsibility of the homeowner or landlord and so it's worth taking time to check they are well insulated.

Ian Christie, Welsh Water's managing director of water services said: "Frozen pipes which burst can cause unnecessary inconvenience and expense. However, this can be easily avoided by taking a few moments to check and protect the pipes."

"If you are unfortunate enough to experience frozen pipes, then make sure you don't leave taps open and unattended. As the pipes thaw, the water will likely start to flow which could lead to baths and sinks overflowing if you are not around."

"Our message is help us 'Wrap up Wales' and take action now to prevent a problem that can cause a tremendous amount of inconvenience and expense - at the time of the year when you'd least want to face it."

More information on how to prevent pipes freezing can be found on the company's website www.dwrcymru.com or the campaign website www.wrapupwales.com.

There is also an opportunity to apply for one of 600 free lagging kits.

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Vale village's Christmas market is a real success



Photographs by
IAN DIXON

PETERSTON-super-Ely Church Hall was the venue for the annual Christmas market in the village and once again it was superbly organised by Pat Cadwalladr.

The event proved an outstanding success with many craft and food stalls, as well mulled wine, soup, rolls and hot drinks, provided by the church ladies.

The bran tub proved very popular with the children, and for entertainment, there were carols from the local school choir, and the church choir, with support from the handbell group.



Crackers' Llantwit Christmas lunch

ON Christmas Day 2015, with Phil Hibbert from Bethel Baptist Church in Llantwit Major, a group of local people – dubbed the 'Llantwit Christmas Crackers' – got together to provide Christmas lunch for isolated older people in our community.

It proved such a success they did it again in 2016. Some 27 people attended, and comments included: 'If it wasn't for you I would have been home again on my own this Christmas'; and 'It was absolutely wonderful, I was overcome with everything, the people, the food, the presents!'

It wouldn't have been successful without the support from the local community. Thanks go to:

Stuart Sloan from Sloan's, Llantwit Major's clothes shop, donated the gifts for Santa to hand out on the day.

Wiltshire Farm Foods provided the main course.

WA Brown & Son, Co-op Funeral Home, donated the drinks.

Greenlinks Community Transport for the minibuses so we could provide

transport to everyone who needed it. Sally Hanks, Llantwit's mayor popped down to say hello to everyone and the Vale mayor Stuart Egan provided the starters.

For entertainment we had the wonderful local harpist Nia Rees, and the fabulous Ukeladies and Ukeladdies. Owen from Happy Embroidery in Dinas Powys provided the embroidered aprons for all the volunteers to wear, and Holiday Inn Cardiff City Centre provided the sundries and supplies.

Finally, we must mention Eleanor McNamara who knitted mini Christmas puddings for everyone: a wonderful final touch!

However none of this would have been possible if it hadn't been for the volunteers, huge thank you from everyone who attended.

We can't list everyone, but the whole community came out to support us with donations and gifts.

We look forward to seeing you in 2017!

For more information please contact jane.platts1@gmail.com.

JP

Makaton-friendly business recognised

A BARRY business has been recognised for its use of Makaton, a speech, sign and symbol language, to help people communicate and make its services accessible to children and adults with learning or communication difficulties.

EarlyVersity is the first high street business in Wales to be awarded the honour and only the fifth institution in Wales to be recognised with this accolade.

Peter Thomas, a director at EarlyVersity, explained: 'As a company formed by educational practitioners, we are passionate about communication and firmly believe that all children and adults with a learning or communication difficulty should be able to access the same services and facilities as everyone else.'

The Makaton Friendly scheme is designed to recognise organisations or

businesses that use Makaton in a simple, informal way to make Makaton users feel welcome and enable them to access services within their community.

For some people, Makaton is related to the CBeebies character Mr Tumble, who uses the signs and symbols in his show *Something Special*. All organisations that have been awarded Makaton Friendly status have demonstrated that staff know when and how to use the language programme, which was developed in the UK in the 1970s.

EarlyVersity uses Makaton in its coffee shop, child development classes and shows, and even introduced the system

in its recent Christmas 'experience' with Santa using Makaton.

Kay Rawlinson who manages the Makaton programme at EarlyVersity, added:

'I'm thrilled that, as a company, we have been awarded such an honour as the Makaton Friendly status provides. Using Makaton in our business is natural to all of our staff given our background in teaching and education.'

EarlyVersity hopes to encourage other business to follow suit and use Makaton in their daily interactions and communications with customers.

For further information about Makaton, visit www.makaton.org/.

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Donations can also be made online by going to the Just Giving website and search for **The Horse and Groom just giving page**. The Just Giving page is still ongoing. **Our total to date is £2,873.70**



Donations

can be made by calling in or phoning Jo at The Horse and Groom. Tel: 01446 772253

SUCCESSFUL YEAR COMES TO A CLOSE FOR 'ENTHRALLING' VALE CHOIR VERITAS



Photographs by
IAN DIXON

VALE choir Caritas completed its 2016 programme with a Christmas concert in St German's Church, Roath, Cardiff.

The building was ideal for the main Caritas choir, which filled the church with music that enthralled the packed audience in the large church.

The choir's director, Lindsay Gray, thanked everyone for their support over the last year, commenting that since the formation of Caritas in 2013, nearly £25,000 had been raised for charities and good causes.



THE ART OF INDUSTRIAL SOUTH WALES GRIPS COWBRIDGE U3A

THE pre-Christmas appearance of Brian Davies, former curator of Pontypridd Museum, at Cowbridge U3A's history group has become as much a tradition as decorated trees, mulled wine, mince pies and transport disruption.

This time, the subject of his illustrated talk (delivered, as usual, without the aid of notes) was the art of industrial south Wales, from the mid-18th century to the late-19th century. Not the most interesting subject, one might think, to non-specialists, but Brian's presentations are tailored to his audience, with humour and no 'highbrow' jargon.

The audience was informed that the greatest regional concentration of industrial paintings in Europe and, perhaps, even the world, is of south Wales, but, unfortunately, no outstanding collection of such paintings is actually held in Wales.

The first group of landscapes displayed revealed an area still largely bucolic in character; Ibbetson's 1790 *Bridge of Beauty*, now on display at Pontypridd Museum (bought for £24,000), shows the new bridge at Pontypridd in the distance and depicts a rural scene, as did a picture of the forge at Trostrey.

There was even an 1850's painting of Mountain Ash, with a countryside of golden autumn colours – and only a few small collieries in view.

Industrialisation had started in south Wales as early as the reign of Elizabeth I, with copper smelting at Aberdulais and a blast furnace at Tintern.

By the early 18th century, industry had increased substantially, with iron-making in Pontypool, extensive copper smelting in Neath and Swansea and coal mining in Glamorgan. This was all captured in paintings.

The great ironworks of the 19th century in Merthyr, Blaenavon and Nantyglo furnished the subject of many of the works that were shown, as artists had a fascination with the colours (black smoke, red fires) that were generated by the blast furnaces, both by day and by night.

Paintings showed how humans had the ability to alter the landscape completely, with green fields and trees being replaced by industry, with its multitude of chimneys belching thick black smoke, from Dowlais to the Rhymney Valley.

The other great industry of south Wales, coal mining, was well represented in paintings, with depictions of dangerous methods of descent into mines (men in a small basket and boys hanging on to the lowering chains) and hazardous working conditions in the tunnels (called roadways), with very young children often being employed. There were even bilingual signs in the paintings of underground scenes.

Transportation was not neglected, with scenes of horse-drawn tram roads, the canals built to transport

iron and coal and also the railways that supplanted the waterways, including the massive iron structure of the Crumlin viaduct, the highest one in Britain throughout its working life.

The talk ended with scenes of unrest in south Wales; the Chartist uprising in 1839, which had the aim of gaining political rights for the working class, and the Rebecca Riots of the 1840s over the introduction of toll roads (the turnpike trusts).

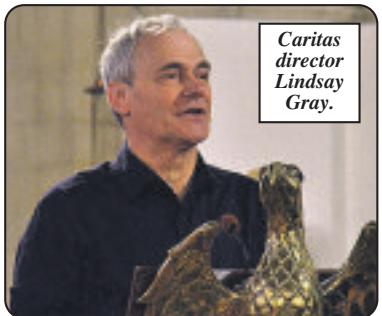
The history group is already anticipating Brian's next pre-Christmas offering! SPM

CHARITY QUIZ

Barry Town Mayor, Coun Charlotte Williams, will be holding a charity quiz night at Market Street Club, Barry on Friday, January 13, 2017 at 7pm for 7.30pm, to raise money for The Down's Syndrome Association, Breast Cancer Now and the Stroke Association.

The evening will include a raffle and buffet, priced at £5 per person with a maximum of six people per team.

For more information, contact juliehurd@barrytowncouncil.gov.uk or telephone 01446 704 921.



Go to the **Glamorgan GEM** website for the latest stories and breaking news...

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Children from local primary schools battle it out on the netball court for a place in the Bridgend final.

'Hot shot' netball teams through to Bridgend finals

EIGHT primary schools have netted a place in the finals of the Bridgend County Borough netball championship after shining on court at recent netball festivals.

Bridgend County Borough Council and Welsh Netball organised the festival.

Plasnewydd, Nantymoel, Maes yr Haul and West Park primary schools came top during four local festivals held recently, with runners-up Caerau, Ogmore Vale, Pencoed and Mynydd Cynffig schools also going through to the Bridgend County Borough finals, which will be held in February.

The top two teams at the finals will then go up against primary schools from Merthyr Tydfil and

Camelots end year with a win

THE final match for the Barry Chess Club in 2016 saw the Camelots in Division 2 play host to the Pentrech B team.

This ended with a convincing win for Barry by a score of 4-1. Rhys Steele maintained his 100 per cent record with his fourth straight win.

He was ably supported by Sam Jukes on board 2 and Tom Cooke on board 5 who also recorded victories. To complete the scoring there were draws for Stephen Bonutto and John Stephenson.

At the halfway stage with nine games played the Camelots sit in the relatively secure spot of sixth position. We have earned 22 points so far and are 4.5 points above the relegation zone.

On the basis that we need in the region of 41 points for security we are already more than halfway to securing our status in division 2.

Stephen Bonutto still leads the Alec Wood trophy after six months of recording with an increase in his rating of 182 points.

It will prove harder to earn points for him in the final five months of

Rhonda Cynon Taff in the Glamorgan Valleys final for the opportunity to reach the Welsh finals which will take place at Sophia Gardens in Cardiff in May.

Young netballers have been lucky enough to have three Celtic Dragon players on hand during the Bridgend County festivals. Bethan Dyke – Celtic Dragons WA/C from Bridgend, Kalifa McCollin – Celtic Dragons GA/GS from Trinidad and Tobago and Stacey Peeters – Celtic Dragons WD/C from New Zealand have been helping the teams on the court, giving tips to players, and giving autographs and having photos with the teams.

Coun Hailey Townsend, said: "It's great to hear that so many local young people, girls and boys alike, are continuing to enjoy netball. We've seen some fantastic team work and dedication shown through these festivals.

To find out more about local netball clubs please visit www.welshnetball.co.uk or call 02920 334952. For more details on sporting opportunities within schools contact the council's AYPD on 01656 815224 or email aypd@bridgend.gov.uk.

Sully youngsters are kitted out by a donation

SULLY SPORTS has been handed a bumper donation to help pay for new kit for one of its youth teams.

The club's under-12s Whites team has received £1,000 from leading housebuilder Persimmon Homes East Wales for new shirts and to help pay to use training facilities.

Andrew Nourish, of the club, said: "We are extremely grateful to Persimmon Homes for this generous donation.

"We are a mixed kids football team playing in the Vale local league. We take subs but running a sports team is very expensive these days and we need all the help we can get. It's fantastic that large companies like Persimmon are willing to help clubs like ours."

The donation comes as part of Persimmon Homes' Community Champions initiative.

The Community Champions scheme sees the builder donate up to £2,000 to charities and community groups

recording as he now has a rating in excess of 1600 so he can only pick up a maximum of 24 points per game against the 32 he could previously earn.

In second place is Anlan Qiu with a ratings increase of 144. Perhaps of more danger is Nayanna Kalavala in third place because although her rating has improved by 137 points, her rating remains below 1600.

The Barry Chess Club meets at 7.30 pm each Monday at the West End Club, St. Nicholas Road, Barry CF62 6QY.

The club is open to players of all standards; whether you are interested in playing competitive chess or just the occasional friendly games.

New players are very welcome to just turn up on the night but if you contact one of the club members through the website we can explain what is happening on the night you have in mind, and arrange for someone to greet you on your arrival.

For more details visit our website at <http://barrychessclub.yolasite.com>.

PHIL JONES

Penllyne Bridge Club results

PENLLYNE Bridge Club December results:

Thursday, December 1 (12 pairs): 1st. J. Evans & C. Impey 68.84%, 2nd. A. Evans & K. Price 64.59%, 3rd. M. East & B. Easterbrook 59.09%.

Thursday, December 8 (16 pairs): 1st. M. & H. Thomas 62.66%, 2nd. M. Baron & B. Tucker 61.36% 3rd. C. & J. Nunn 59.74%.

Anniversary game arranged for Athletic

A special match between Ospreys A league leaders Bridgend Athletic and Bridgend County youth has been arranged for next Wednesday, January 11, at the Brewery Field, kick off 7.15pm to celebrate 40 years of youth rugby at Bridgend Athletic. All are welcome.

CN

Welsh riders land Boxing Day wins

TWO Welsh riders Alan Johns and David Pritchard, who were in action at Wincanton on Boxing Day, both rode winners.

Johns riding the Tim Vaughan trained *Chakisto* took the Bathwick Tyres Novices Handicap Hurdle by one-and-three-quarter lengths from *Lough Derg Island* and Pritchard won the closing Solstice Kitchens Standard Open National Hunt Flat race at Bangor last Thursday.

Arian, which is by *King's Theatre*, was backed from 50-1 to 33-1 and won by three lengths from the 5-2 favourite *Run To Milan* by three and a half lengths from *Lalor*.

Chakisto went off the 3-1 favourite and *Run To Milan* who was having its first run in public was available at odds of 10-1.

At Chepstow, on Coral Welsh Grand National day, Evan Williams' promising six-year-old *Pobbles Bay* was a good winner of the Coral.co.uk Money Back If Your Horse Falls Novices' Limited Handicap Chase under Adam Wedge.

Pobbles Bay could be in the

line-up for next year's Welsh Grand National all going well.

FLINT'S 33-1 BANGOR STUNNER

Vale trainer John Flint collected his Christmas expenses when his four-year-old bay filly *Arian* made all the running under his son Rhys Flint to land the Yorton Stallions Mares Maiden Open National Hunt Flat race at Bangor last Thursday.

Arian, which is by *King's Theatre*, was backed from 50-1 to 33-1 and won by three lengths from the 5-2 favourite *Run To Milan* by three and a half lengths from *Lalor*.

At Chepstow, on Coral Welsh Grand National day, Evan Williams' promising six-year-old *Pobbles Bay* was a good winner of the Coral.co.uk Money Back If Your Horse Falls Novices' Limited Handicap Chase under Adam Wedge.

The former, a five-year-old bay mare who carried bottom weight in the Gwynne Price Transport Mares Handicap, was ridden by

Adam Wedge and was returned at odds of 10-1 and the latter, who at five was the youngest of the five runners, took the Finning Handicap Chase when coming home five lengths ahead of *Rock On Rocky*.

Cape Caster, a 11-4 chance, was partnered by Conor Ring. Hopes of a Ffos Las hat-trick for Evan were dashed when Debra Hamer's top-weighted *Looks Like Power*, ridden by Richard Patrick, proved too good for his *Present Times* in the closing O'Brien & Partners Handicap Hurdle.

SILVER STREAKS IN

Silver Streak, a three-year-old grey gelding racing for the first time for Llancaarfarn trainer Evan Williams, streaked home a 12 lengths winner of the Happy New Year Handicap Hurdle at Taunton.

Silver Streak, the youngest horse in the race, was partnered by stable jockey Paul Moloney and was returned the 2-1 favourite.

BRIAN LEE

WALES STUDENTS NAME WORLD CUP SQUAD

WALES Students have named a strong 36-man training squad in preparation for the Student Rugby League World Cup in July 2017.

The squad contains a number of professional players as well as two who have also won full caps for Wales – Paul Emanuelli who played for Wales in 2014 and Morgan Evans of Gloucestershire.

All Golds who is now an established regular in the Welsh national side and could potentially make two trips to Australia next year.

Evans' All Golds team-mate Liam Rice-Wilson joins him in the squad, whilst South Wales Ironmen

contribute eight players in

Cobi Green, Ethan Coombes,

Huw Parks, Lewis Hughes,

Jordan Sheridan, Lloyd Selby-Smith, Macauley Harris and Sam Buckthought.

"I feel like I say this every year but I do believe we have an excellent crop of players coming through, all putting their hands up for one of the 24 places on the plane. No disrespect

to players who have gone before but I think it's the best group I've had during the last four years, certainly in terms of depth. Wales Rugby League do a fantastic job developing young players and many of them have progressed to be in contention for a World Cup place.

Wales Students coach Latham Tawhai said: "We had a great turn out for the recent training day so I'd firstly like to thank all the boys for their attendance, not only this week but also at the first session we had a few weeks back. We also had a number of coaches in attendance as well which is great for the players to be able to develop and gain experience from different people.

"We now have a core group who have been together for a couple of years, and this time around, we'll be able to add a little bit of experience which will make a big difference. As you always get at this level, there are also some players with great athletic ability who are fairly new to the game and as they develop, they'll offer plenty of positives to the squad in their own way."

"We'll now spend the next few months working with this group before cutting the squad further in the lead up to the tournament. They'll have plenty of opportunity to show what they are capable of during this period."

"We'll be looking to play a few games as part of our preparations and at this stage we'd welcome anyone who may be able to provide some opposition. It's an exciting time to be involved in Student Rugby League and I think we're all looking forward to the next few months and of course the World Cup itself."

Wales Students are looking for funding to assist the players' travels to the tournament and team manager Mark Jones is inviting companies, organisations and individuals to get involved.

Jones said: "This is a very exciting time for WRL and these young players, a chance of a lifetime. We have strength in depth this

year and hope to go all the way to the World Cup Final but for our dream to become reality, we are looking for companies to sponsor the World Cup squad. Click here if you would like to contribute."

An official WRL souvenir magazine previewing all three of the World Cups in 2017 – Student, Wheelchair and the full tournament at the end of the year – will be available in the spring.

Squad: Lewis Harrison (Bangor University), Morgan Evans (University of Bath), Harry Boots, Dafydd Hellard, George Jenkins, Jordan Howells, Tom Morgan, Jamie Murphy (all Cardiff Metropoli University), Huw Parks, Jordan Sheridan (both Cardiff University), Ethan Coombes, Cobi Green, Macauley Harris, Paul Emanuelli, Archie Snook (all Coleg y Cymoedd), Matt Davies, Liam Rice-Wilson (both University of Gloucestershire), Connor Davies, Curtis Davies, Sion Jones, David Phillips, Marcus Webb (all Leeds Beckett University), Connor Meese, Sam Owen (both Leeds Trinity University), Jack Bond (Liverpool John Moores University), Ieuan Jones (Northumbria University), Daniel Crabtree (University of Nottingham), Adrian Chaima, Jordan Elphick, Alec Wheatley (all Nottingham Trent University), Lewis Hughes (Neath Port Talbot College), Jarad Hinett, Lloyd Selby-Smith (both University of South Wales), Gethin Evans, Louie Ford (Swansea University), Sam Buckthought (University of Worcester).

Pelé is set to visit the Vale

BRAZILIAN legend Pelé is the latest sporting legend to star in a sports dinner at the Vale Sports Arena on June 2, supporting PG10 and local junior sport.

Pelé, who scored 1281 goals in 1363 games, winning the World Cup on three occasions for Brazil, is the all-time leading goalscorer for Brazil with 77 goals in 91 games and is widely regarded as the greatest footballer of all time.

The event takes place the same weekend as the UEFA Champions

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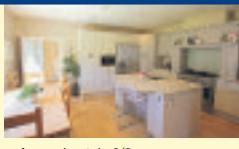


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- Community alarm
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H4U Reference 220404

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- Level access shower
- Community alarm

Rent £106.11 per week including water charges

WINSTON ROAD, BARRY



H4U Reference 229072

- Two-bedroom house

Rent £104.83 per week including water charges

Brynn will be remembered as a real gent BY BRIAN LEE

F O R M E R racehorse trainer Brynn Palling, who trained at Ystradown before moving to a new purpose-built yard which he designed himself at Tredodridge in 1993, will be remembered as a real gent.

Brynn, who recently died aged 86, was a man who not only had the respect of his owners and stable staff, but also was a man always willing to lend a helping hand.

During his time at Ystradown, Brynn and his beloved wife Marge also ran a builder's merchant and scrap business and a frequent visitor there was the great National Hunt jockey Johnny Francome, who with Clive Candy rode a lot of winners for Brynn.

Brynn started training horses around 45 years ago and he retired in 2013. A personal friendship with Paddy Rudkin, head lad at the time to the legendary trainer Sir Henry Cecil, meant that Brynn and his wife Marge spent holidays at Warren Place in Newmarket and Cecil took a personal interest in Brynn from the start.

Indeed it was Sir Henry who gave Brynn a reference when he applied for his trainer's licence to the Jockey Club and he also helped Brynn by arranging for Brynn's initial intake of horses to include some very decent ones from

£80,000 so that the eight

At the beginning, Brynn trained only over-the-sticks and he had his first success with a horse called *Landslide* which won a three miles hurdle race at Stratford just three weeks after Brynn had obtained his licence.

Other successes quickly followed and all the Warren Place horses caught the judge's eye.

Echo Summit won the prestigious Double Diamond Hurdle at Chepstow and was also a winner at Cheltenham, the spiritual home of National Hunt racing.

Princely Fool, *Princess Drive*, *Elysee Palace* and *Another Deed* were other good winners for Brynn. However, when *Brynya*, named after Brynn and Marge fell jumping the last fence in the lead at Chepstow in 1998 and was killed, Brynn decided to turn his attention to flat racing.

He loved to buy yearlings to break in himself and had the knack of getting them to win as two-year-olds on their initial start. His most famous racehorse was *Carranita*, which he bought for just 800 guineas at the Doncaster sales and which was syndicated to eight lucky owners.

During his racing career, which lasted until she was eight years old, she won 16 races, three or four of them listed races, and prize money of £154,891.

She was eventually sold for breeding for

very decent ones from



Brynn Palling.

lucky owners received almost £30,000 each in prize money and sale proceeds, for an initial outlay of only £100 each.

It was in 1993 that Brynn sold his house and yard at Ystradown to developers for private housing. He was then 64 years old, and at an age where most people would be thinking of retiring.

The new yard extended to 44 acres and included a seven furlong woodchip all-weather gallop, indoor school an American barn, a Harlow barn and stable yard, an oval exercise ring and horse walker, together with his new home, a large four-bedroomed bungalow.

The move paid off and he had some of his most successful seasons, winning 100 races in just over four years, including prestigious races at Goodwood, Doncaster, Chester, York and Newbury.

For Brynn, however, racing was never a

numbers game. His horses' welfare always came first and this was reflected in the number of horses bought as two-year-olds that had careers spanning six and seven years.

Paul Young, who was a member of the *Carranita* syndicate, said: "Only the best was good enough for Brynn's horses and he treated all his owners in the same kindly way whether they had a share in a horse or whether they had three or four horses in his yard."

Also full of praise for Brynn was Aberkenfig's Delyth Thomas who said: "Brynn was a real gentleman and he would do anything to help you." When Brynn retired, a number of people lined up to pay tribute to him and this is what just three of them had to say.

Chris Mason, who went on to become a trainer himself, said: "Brynn and his wife Marge always gave my family a warm welcome."

Peter Morgan who rode out at Brynn's yard: "My memories of this time were some of the happiest of my life."

The last words belong to former top female rider Cathy Gannon, who rode Brynn's final winner

Gipsy Rider at Chepstow in 2012, and who said: "I learned so much from my time with Brynn in South Wales."

BRIAN LEE

Ty Hafan lottery draw winners

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackp lottery draw number D963.

● £2000: 853643.

● The rollover, which is currently £10,500, was not won this week.

● £10: 518580, 926475, 153331, 554850, 652430, 237341, 255352, 250291, 889087, 511152, 225373, 424176, 423273, 301858, 317993, 330881, 1881531, 001405, 001700, 001115.

● £5: 197853, 348391, 695572, 395579, 862002, 628940, 829815, 126812, 167844, 968725, 141966, 435290, 626237, 407165, 379156, 253640, 790877, 261444, 113668, 626943, 715797, 853009, 199325, 492659, 192064, 387570, 111744, 436061, 799865, 716489, 816000, 534126, 864826, 277755, 717312, 240759, 870794, 161934, 693094, 651869, 378519, 451978, 462915, 783579, 206444, 814302, 423458, 644387, 116244, 120310, 371311, 203091, 940921, 941142, 822976, 1242649, 1133137, 1447746, 005511, 005344.

The GEM cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions contained in the above. For lottery information please call telephone 02920 672062.

Putting the 'care' into care homes

TO go to the Caribbean and have a nice bouquet of flowers are among the Christmas wishes at a Maesteg care home.

At least two of the more than 50 residents at Bryn Celyn will have their wish come true as part of an initiative organised by the home.

Residents at the residential and nursing home on Maesteg Park, were invited to write their heart's desire on a star and hang it on a Christmas tree.

Avinish Goyal, managing director of the homes' parent company, Hallmark Care Homes, plans to make a least two wishes happen for a resident from each of the 15 Hallmark Care Homes across England and Wales.

Mr Goyal said: "We wanted to give our residents an opportunity to do something or have something they thought they would never get a chance to do again."

"It could be anything from seeing their favourite show in the West End, to visiting their place of birth, or a long lost relative. It's also a great reminiscence activity, particularly for

our residents living with dementia.

"All of our residents get Christmas presents from Hallmark on Christmas Day, but getting to know what they would like to do or have gives us an opportunity to truly enhance their happiness and make a difference."

Wishes that were granted from last year's competition included reuniting a resident with his teenage sweetheart after 20 years apart and taking a resident to celebrate her 95th birthday at the Ritz.

'Lifestyle leader' at Bryn Celyn, Mark Chandler said: "We are very excited to make some of these wishes come true for our residents. Since we have encouraged our residents to think of a wish, we have found out some great things about them which we would never have known."

The home also plans to make some smaller wishes come true and says it will look at making others happen throughout the year and on the resident's birthday.

The 2016 Christmas wish winners will be announced on January 27, 2017.

What's on and where?

Cowbridge Choral

COWBRIDGE Choral Society resumes weekly rehearsals on January 5, starting with a new piece for them: the Dvorak *Stabat Mater*, for a performance later in the spring with Pontypridd Choral Society.

New members are always welcome to join the choir. Rehearsals take place at the United Free Church, Westgate (opposite the police station) at 7.30pm on Thursdays: experience is not essential.

Tax help for elderly

Free tax advice for older people is offered at Roz Couzens' Chiropody

surgery, Unit 4, Commercial House, Commercial Street, Llantwit Major (CF61 1RB) on Monday, January 9 from 10am to midday.

No appointment is necessary. To access TOP's helpline, call 0845 601 3321 or 01308 488066. Home visits can also be arranged via this line for those unable to attend.

Valeways guided walks

ON Wednesday, January 11 the Coffee Shop Strollers will meet at Romilly Cafe, Cold Knap in Barry at 10.30am.

They will also meet in Cowbridge at the Physic Garden fountain at 2.30pm.

Expressions of interest

ST DAVIDS MEADOW CORNTOWN



Hafod Housing Association, together with the Vale of Glamorgan Council, announce a new development at St Davids Meadow, Corntown.

Expressions of interest are invited from Homes4U members with a local connection to Corntown (local work, family or life connections).

Properties are expected end of February or early March.

A local lettings policy applies to this scheme.

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Applicants must be registered with HOMES4U to apply for these homes.

Hafod Housing Association is committed to providing a safe and sustainable environment and will be asking for references and carrying out interviews with prospective tenants to achieve the full potential for this new development.



To apply, call the hotline, e-mail us at HOMES4U@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk or apply in writing to:

Vale of Glamorgan Council Environment and Housing Civic Offices, Holton Road Barry CF63 4RU

Community choir's festive concert

BARRY Community Choir celebrated an early Christmas with a well attended festive concert.

As well as carols old and new, Emma and Sian entertained with piano duets and talented young tenor, Osian Wyn Bowen, performed several pieces including 'Bring Him Home' from *Les Miserables*.

The choir starts rehearsals again on Wednesday, January 11 from 7.30pm – 9.30pm at Crossways Church, Barry. All welcome. See our website, Facebook page, email: info@barrycommunitychoir.com or call 01446 748724.

Alan's big race win

ALAN JOHNS, who is attached to Tim Vaughan's Aberthyn yard, saw the old year out in fine style when winning the BetFred 'Wishing You A Happy New Year' Handicap Hurdle' at Newbury on Vaughan's *Theligny*, which scored by two-and-a-half lengths from the gumbleton Geordie Des Champs trained by west Wales' Rebecca Curtis, a winner of its previous four starts.

Theligny, who was returned at odds of 12-1, is also a consistent sort and was winning for the fourth time this season.

Evan wins on Somme Boy

AT the Cambridgeshire Harriers Hunt Club Point-To-Point Steeplechases at Cottenham, Llanharan's Evan David won the Young Horse Open Maiden Race on the Andrew Pennock-trained, French-bred, five-year-old *Somme Boy*. A 5-1 chance, *Somme Boy* won by a length from Kev The Car.

BRIAN LEE

OBITUARY

A dedicated volunteer and true gentleman

THE following tribute has been paid by the Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS) to Penarth volunteer Martin Vick, who has passed away.

It's not hard to describe what Martin was to GVS: he was full of life and joy, which was hugely infectious to the team. He had a wonderful zest for life and he was almost certainly born with a smile on his face.

He volunteered at GVS once a week, finding time amongst all his other commitments to put in an efficient and effective shift, while bringing happiness to the office for that day each week.

He loved music and entertained us with his singing and knowledge of music. He had a passion for football and talked with enthusiasm about what his squad would be if he was manager.

Martin led a very active life. He was part of

MARK STILLMAN

Cowbridge U3A

THE next meeting of Cowbridge U3A will be a talk by Peter Douglas-Jones entitled 'A Day on a Grouse Moor', at 2pm on Wednesday, January 11 in Cowbridge Town Hall.

Visitors welcome (there is a small fee, which includes refreshments). See www.u3asites.org.uk/cobridge.

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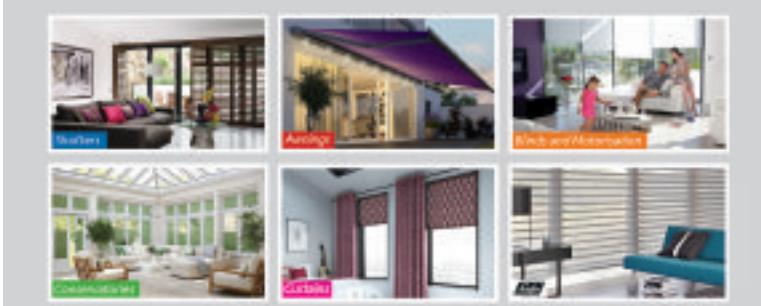
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Family Notices

THOMAS

Graham Denis

Peacefully after a short illness on Monday, December 19.

Loving husband of 40 years to childhood sweetheart, the late Betty Joan Thomas. Loving father to Carol, Cheryl and the late Stephen. Cherished grandfather to Claire, Connie, Daniel and Adam and Great Grandfather to Hollie, Rachael, Sophia and Isabella.

Graham will sadly be missed by all his family and friends.

EYNON

Martyn Henry

Passed away peacefully on Wednesday, 28th December, 2016 at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend, surrounded by his loving family, Martyn of Coychurch, Bridgend, beloved husband of Geraldine, brother of Robert, uncle to Gail and Neil and great-uncle to Lewis.

The funeral will be held on Thursday, 12th January, 2017 at Coychurch Crematorium, Bridgend at 1.15pm.

Family flowers only, but should you wish to donate in memory of Martyn, the chosen charity is Cancer Research Wales c/o Mel & Ron Watkins Funeral Services, Graigwenn, 12 Pentwyn Road, Pencoed, Bridgend, CF35 6SB. Tel: 01656 860545.

CRAIG

Rebecca (Rita)

Peacefully at Llandough Hospital on December 21, Rita, aged 96 years, of Llantwit Major. Beloved wife to the late Bob Craig and much loved mum of David and mother-in-law to Eileen. Loving grandmother to Tim, Neal and Natalie, dearly loved great grandma to Danielle, Leo, Ephram, James and Sofia.

Rita is resting at the Vale Funeral Service, 181 Court Road, Barry until her service at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry on Tuesday, January 17 at 2pm (where all please meet). Family flowers only please.

REYNOLDS

Noel Stewart Bantock (Pat)

Formerly from Barry and more recently from Porthcawl, Pat passed away peacefully on December 21, 2016 at Highborder Lodge Care Home, near Stroud.

Both funeral service and cremation will be at Gloucester on Tuesday, January 10 at 1pm. Family flowers only please.

Enquiries to Henry on 01452 812013.

DAVIES

Glyn Brinley (Bryn)

Peacefully on December 22 at Marie Curie Hospice, Penarth, Bryn, well known for his time at Pickfords, Alta Express, Christian Salversen, Monex and S & K Haulage.

Beloved husband to Maureen, much loved dad of Chris and Jane. Loving step dad to Lorraine, Stephen and Royston. Special father-in-law of Alyson. A cherished grampy Bryn and pappa to Gareth, Rebecca, Laura, Katie, David, Richard, Sarah, Daniel, Nicole, Alisha and his great grandchildren, Emilie-Grace, Ethan, Kellyn, Faith and Baby K.

He will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved him.

Bryn is in the care of Lyndsay Ellis @ The Vale Funeral Service, 181 Court Road, Barry until his service at Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry on Thursday, 12 January at 1pm. Family flowers only. Donations, if desired, may be made at the service or via Bryn's online tribute page at www.valefuneralservice.co.uk, where you are also welcome to leave your personal messages, photos and memories. All donations received to support Marie Curie Hospice.

REES

Kathleen Anne (Kate)

Died on December 23, 2016 at Holme Tower hospice after a long illness, bravely borne. Wife of Allan, mother of David and Owen, mother-in-law of Anne and Jody, nana of Amy, Lucy and Sophie.

Resting at A.G. Adams & Son Funeral Home, Gladstone Road, Barry until a celebration of her life at St. John the Baptist Church, Sully on Thursday, January 12, at 10.45am, followed by cremation at the Cardiff & Glamorgan Crematorium, Barry at 12 noon.

Family flowers only and donations to Marie Curie Cancer Care, Holme Tower, Penarth, CF64 3YR are requested. No dark clothing please.

COBOURNE

Mary

Sadly Mary died on Friday, 16th December 2016 at 'Y Bwthyn Newydd', Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend. She now joins her husband, David, who died earlier this year.

She is loved and will be missed by her children, grandchild, great grandchildren and family.

The funeral will be held at 2.15pm on Tuesday, 10th January 2017 at Coychurch Crematorium, Bridgend. Family and close friends only please. No flowers, but donations if you wish to either Cancer Research UK or Macmillan Cancer Support.

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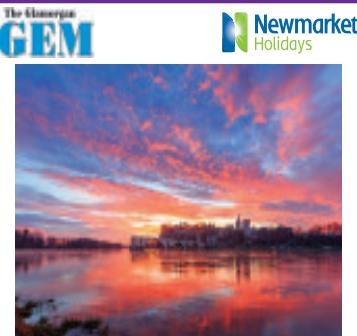
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Dated / Dyddiedig: 5 January, 2017

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REVISITING WALES' HISTORIC SUMMER...

Robson Kanu sends Wales into dreamland... and next up are the English in Lens!

WALES ended their 58-year wait to qualify for a major tournament last summer as Chris Coleman's team competed in Euro 2016.

Yet few would have imagined that the Dragons would have reached the semi-final stages, where ultimately they were defeated by a Ronaldo-led Portugal, the eventual winners.

Gareth Jameson was in Bordeaux for Wales' historic first game against Slovakia, and here we revisit his report from that day.

THE first game of any tournament is a tricky one – you want to set out your stall, show what you're capable of and make a winning start, but are more than aware that to start the tournament with a defeat can put you on the back foot.

Barry RFC return to action with derby game

FOLLOWING the Christmas and New Year break, Barry return to league action this weekend with a mouthwatering home fixture against current League leaders and local rivals Dinas Powys, kick off at 2.30pm.

The early season game at Dinas saw the home side gain a four point victory, so Barry will be keen to avenge that defeat and stretch their unbeaten run to eight games in the process.

If you have some time to kill, Barry youth are playing Llantwit Major at Cardiff Arms Park at 12

With Wales, add in the pressure of a nation priming itself to make up for 58 years of defeat and disaster – not that this squad would allow themselves to be distracted by the emotion of the occasion, as they have shown in the last 12 months – and the game against Slovakia in Bordeaux on Saturday took on even greater significance than usual.

With a stadium seemingly spilling over with Welsh fans, red overpowering the white of Slovakia, Chris Coleman's men took to the field knowing that having already achieved the goal of qualifying for a major tournament, the next step was to show that they belong on the European stage.

In a game that ebbed and flowed throughout, it seemed that the large Welsh contingent in the Stade de Bordeaux (and the thousands watching in fan zones both in Bordeaux and Cardiff) were going to have to settle for a draw, Gareth Bale's wonderful free kick being cancelled out by Ondrej Duda's effort – but cometh the hour, cometh the man.

Hal Robson Kanu, who proved throughout qualifying he was pivotal to Wales' attacking game with his ability to create space for the likes of Bale

Photo by Huw Evans Agency.



and Ramsey, ran on to a pass by the latter and his scuffed finish rolled into the corner of the net, sending the fans wild and creating another slice of history for this group of players, the first British team in the history of the tournament to win their opening game.

The result became even more important later that evening as England were stunned by a late equaliser in their game with Russia, leaving Coleman's team sitting top of the pile in Group B ahead of their game with Roy Hodgson's men this afternoon (Thursday).

For a game that was already in the spotlight given the derby nature of it, even more significance will now be placed on the end result – a win for Wales would almost certainly ensure qualification for the next stage (and severely dent England's ambitions). A draw will leave both sides fate in their own hands, while an England victory would leave the group looking open going into the final round of matches.

As soon as the final whistle blew on Russia-England, the mind games began. Gareth Bale questioning England's pride and passion and stating that they "big themselves up before they've done anything", accusations that were defended with more than a little annoyance by both Roy Hodgson and Wayne Rooney, Hodgson labelling the comments

"disrespectful".

The ever-controversial Jack Wilshere then claimed that England had the better players and better team, only for ITV pundit Craig Bellamy to suggest that Wales had a better team unity and, more importantly, the best player out of the two teams in Gareth Bale, rubbishing Wilshere's comments – all good banter, but proof, if any were needed, how high the stakes are in Lens later today.

Arguably the pressure lays squarely on England – anything other than a win will put their participation in the tournament past the group stages in serious risk (not including the behaviour of their fans, the unsavoury events in Marseille casting a dark pall over the tournament).

England chasing the game will suit Wales' game plan perfectly, playing tight and allowing Bale to use his pace on the counter-attack to run at the cracking English defence.

Avoiding defeat will be the most important thing, but Wales will definitely feel that if they play further up the pitch that they did on Saturday they can take the game to England.

Should Robson Kanu start the game then Wales will have no problems doing that – his presence will occupy the English defence allowing Bale to attack from deep, something that helped Wales beat Slovakia; up to the point of Robson Kanu's introduction (and the thankfully fully-fit Joe Ledley), Wales were being pushed further and further back by Slovakia, and Bale leading the line (being supported by the phenomenal Jonny Williams) meant Wales weren't getting forward in enough numbers to test the Slovaks.

Play further up the field today and Wales should feel more confident and assured of getting a positive result against our neighbours. It's fascinatingly poised and a nervy and exciting afternoon is in store for supporters of both countries – can Wales add England to their list of scalps? Don't bet against them...

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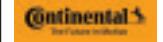
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120 riders set off on a cold, frosty morning from Pontyclun Athletic Club on a route which took them past glistening fields through the Vale lanes to Llantwit Major. There a feed station had been set up supplying mince pies and

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The ride raised £2200

which will be split

between Pedal Power,

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and now

look forward to next

year.

Local cyclists are

welcome to join the

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PG

Cowbridge Darts League round-up

FOR the last darts match of 2016, all the teams gathered at the Edmondes Arms on Tuesday, December 20, for the Great Western Cup. This is a team knockout competition.

It was certainly a crowded evening. The two teams surviving to play in the final are the Edmondes B and Llanharry (the Edmondes B knocking out the Edmondes A in their semi-final). Llanharry reached the final by defeating the Highwayman Inn.

Performances of note were Nigel Thomas (Farmers Arms) hitting his third 180 of the season and Paul Butcher (Edmondes B) with a 79 two-dart-out; treble 13 and a double 20.

League standings, www.darts.apsn.co.uk, after 11 weeks, are:

Edmondes B (70 points), Six Bells Inn (65), Highwayman Inn (62), Edmondes A (54), Edmondes C (51), Llanharry (49), Victoria Inn (46), Hairy Farmers (45), Farmers Arms (44) and Red Lion (9).

Next week (Tuesday, January 10) we will have a full programme of league matches. The Edmondes B hosts the Farmers Arms, the Hairy Farmers hosts the Edmondes A, the Edmondes C hosts the Victoria Inn, Llanharry hosts the Highwayman Inn and the Six Bells Inn hosts the Red Lion.

All matches start at 8.15pm and spectators are always welcome.

For further information e-mail Paul cowbridgedarts@gmail.com, up-to-date information can be found on the website: www.darts.apsn.co.uk. PJT



Llantwit Major RFC resolve to start the new year with a win

WITH 2016 ending with them being both knocked out of the cup competition and then heavily beaten by Cowbridge in the local derby, Llantwit Major RFC will no doubt be hoping for a fresh start to 2017.

Their first fixture sees them travel to the capital this Saturday to take on Cardiff Saracens in the league, the game taking place at the Roath Recreation Ground kick-off 2.30pm.

It has been over 20 years since the two teams have faced each other, with old stalwart second row Shaun Shea just a mere pup when he played in the friendly fixture on the morning of a Five Nations championship game.

The Sarries it would be fair to say have had a poor season so far, winning just two of their 10 fixtures, but one lesson Llantwit have learnt is that there are no easy games in this league.

Reports coming from Roath suggest they may well have lost many of their fixtures but they do put in some good displays and have a young exciting back line.

With Llantwit desperately eager to recover from their early season form, it should then make for an interesting match.

Some people may be wondering if the

Bridgend Bridge Club latest news

THE results for Bridgend Bridge Club for recent events are:

Wednesday, December 21: First, Steve Burgoyne and John Evans; Second, Norma and David Newman; Third Jenny Vaughan and Irene Thomas. Winners on handicap were John Moore and Colin Lewis. Regular club nights take place on Wednesday and Friday at 7pm at Nolton Church Hall. On Thursday afternoons at 2pm, also at Nolton Church Hall, there are gentle bridge sessions when, although master points are awarded, advice on bidding is readily available.

Please arrive at least 10 minutes before the start times to ensure both a prompt commencement of play and to play the maximum possible number of boards.

Full information about the club can be found on the [Bridgend Duplicate Bridge Club website](http://www.bridgendbridgeclub.co.uk) or contacting one of Steve Burgoyne on 01656 661968, John Evans on 01656 880372 or David Newman on 01656 649138. DN

Llantoniens have taken on any New Years resolutions - to complete the game without any yellow cards may well be a good start!

Any supporters are welcome to travel on the team bus leaving the clubhouse at 12.30pm. For the after-match refreshments the club are now located at The Tavistock Pub, Bedford Street, off City Road.

AH

COWBRIDGE RFC BACK IN ACTION

C O W B R I D G E RFC start the new year this Saturday, hoping to extend their unbeaten run to five.

The visitors to the Athletic Field are Canton, who currently lie fourth in the league, one place and one point above Cowbridge.

After a mixed start to the season both teams have hit a rich vein of form - Cowbridge illustrating how much progress they have made with the

impressive victory at Llantwit Major before the break.

Saturday's game should be a cracker, so let's hope for a great crowd to start the new year.

The youth travel to Pontypridd, whom they defeated in the first game of the season.

On January 14, the firsts are at home against Penygraig, and the following Saturday they travel to unbeaten table-toppers Cefn Coed.

A happy New Year to all. RV/RK

Llantwit Major & District Darts League round-up

THE Llantwit Major and District Darts League enters the New Year with its leagues halfway through the season with both the 'A' and 'C' Leagues having played 14 games.

The latest highlights were: Jeff Price 180 and 16 dart leg, Dai Sawyer 19 dart leg.

The LMDDL Committee would like to wish its members, their families and our local communities a Happy New Year.

Monday night 'C' League table: Lamb and Flag 'C1' 117, Shoes St Athan 55, Rugby Club 'A3' 47. DMC

Athan 92, Lamb and Flag 'C2' 91, Wenvoe Arms 88, Bovertown Castle 87, Rugby Club 76, Tudor Tavern 'C2' 69, Kings Head 'C2' 68, Kings Head 'C1' 45, Tudor Tavern 'C1' 37.

Tuesday night 'A' League table: Kings Head 'A1' 126, Wenvoe Arms 111, Fox and Hounds 88, Rugby Club 'A2' 87, Shoes St Athan 85, Golden Cups 81, Four Bells 77, Shoes Peterston 72, Lamb and Flag 70, Rugby Club 'A1' 64, Blacksmith Arms 58, Kings Head

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